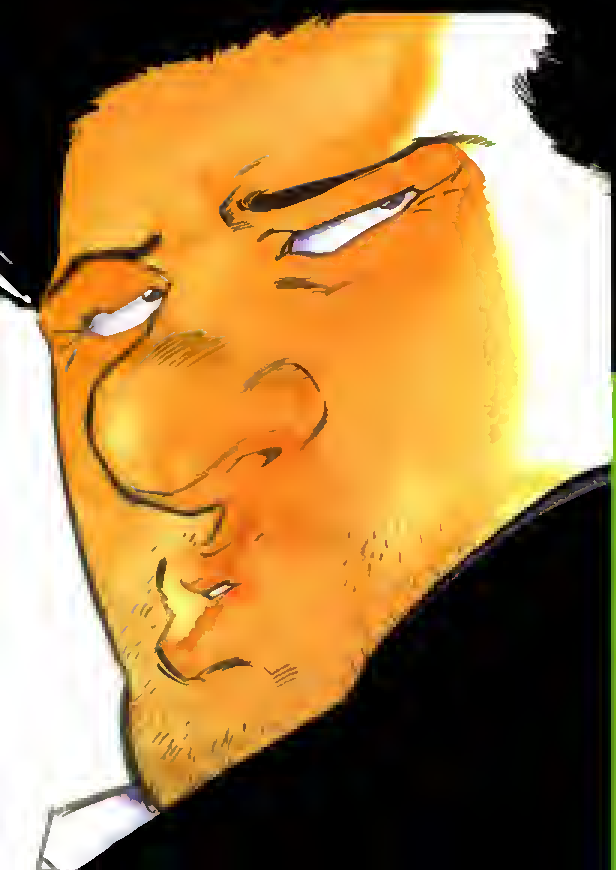
BLACKOUT

ILLUMINATI-MANGA

Tsuchiya Garon
Minegishi Nobuaki

OLD BOY

5



KADOKAWA

SCÉNARIO : TSUCHIYA GARON
DESSIN : MINEGISHI NOBUAKI

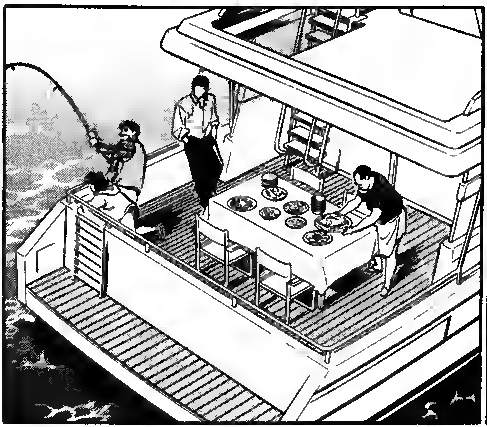
OLD BOY

MEMORIES OF A MAN IN SEARCH OF THE TRUTH

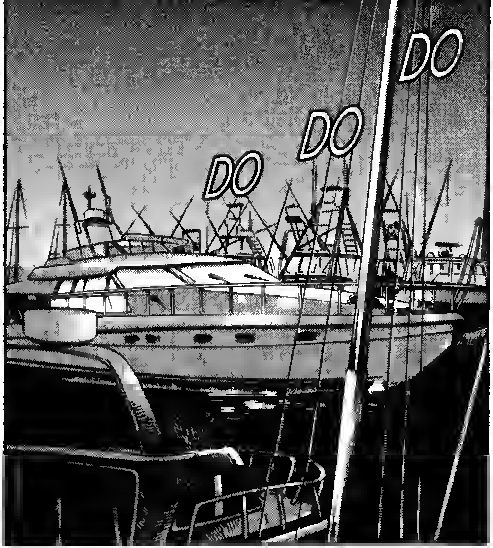
5

KABUTO

CHAPTER 40 : THE REFEREE



NO PROBLEM! I'D BE HAPPY TO COME BACK
I MIGHT INVITE YOU AGAIN THEN.
AAAHH... I HAVE TO GO BACK TO MY NORMAL LIFE TOMORROW... BACK TO THE GOLDEN TOWN, STILL THE SAME LIFE, SAME JOB!


DO
DO
DO

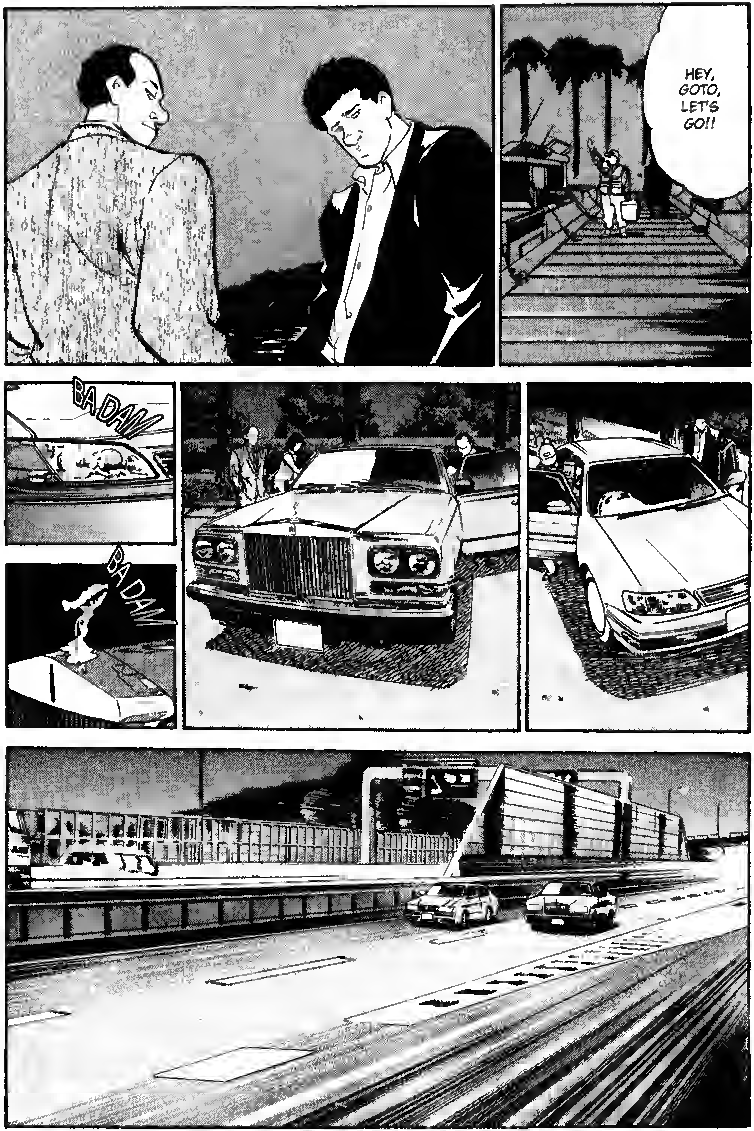
WE BOTH LAID OUR CARDS ON THE TABLE!

IF WE HAD TO COMPARE THIS TO A CONTEST, WE WOULD SAY "TIE"!

YOU CAN'T REMEM-BER!

YOU AGREED TO PLAY MY LITTLE GAME
BUT EVEN THOUGH I TOLD YOU WE WERE CLASSMATES BEFORE

...
DO YOU THINK IT'LL EVER END IF YOU HAVE TO SEARCH IN YOUR MEMORY FOR SO LONG?


HEY, GOTO, LET'S GO!!
BA DAW
BA DAW

VROUUUMM
WOUO-HHH...
I LOVE YOU!!
VROUM

DAMN! I FORGOT TO ASK THEM...
IF THEY'RE GOING TO THE VILLA?!
HE! THAT GIRL...
SHE EVEN GAVE ME HER CELL PHONE NUMBER!!
I WAS TRICKED BY HER CLOTHES AND THE ATMOSPHERE SHE EMITTED EVERY TIME SHE WENT TO THE MOON DOG...
BUT ACTUALLY, SHE'S A WOMAN OF HER AGE!

CRI!
POUH
POUH
VROUM!
FFF
THANK YOU.
TSUKAMOTO IS ALREADY BEING FOOLED..

I'LL RETURN THE CAR BACK TO THE RENTAL AGENCY!
GET OUT!
CRII

MOON
CHIC

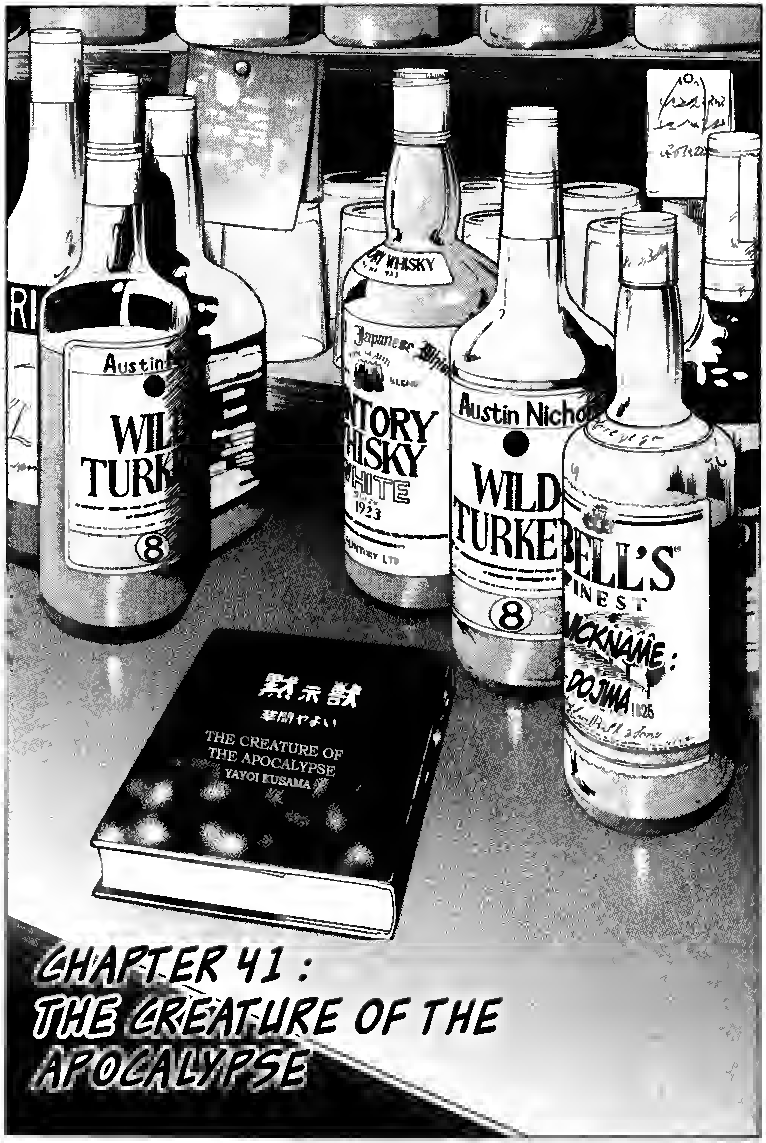
WHO'S THERE...!?

DON'T WORRY!
CLIC
HERE'S THE COPY OF THE BAR'S KEY!
TAKE MISTER DOJIMA'S BOTTLE AND GIVE ME A DRINK!

TSS
TSS
CRR
BELL
NICKLAUS
TOP
SINCE YOU AGREED TO PLAY HIS GAME, HE TOLD ME YOUR PHONE DIDN'T HAVE TO BE TAPPED ANY-MORE

THEN
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
ALL THIS HAS BEEN DONE BY MISTER DOJIMA'S TEAM! I HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH IT!
THE KEY'S COPY AND THE BUG IN THE PHONE...
OR A SUPERVISOR OF THIS GAME'S PROGRESS, IF YOU PREFER THAT!
I'M A REFEREE HIRED BY MISTER DOJIMA ...
LET'S SAY I'VE BEEN SENT TO DECIDE WHO, BETWEEN THE TWO OF YOU, WILL BE THE WINNER!

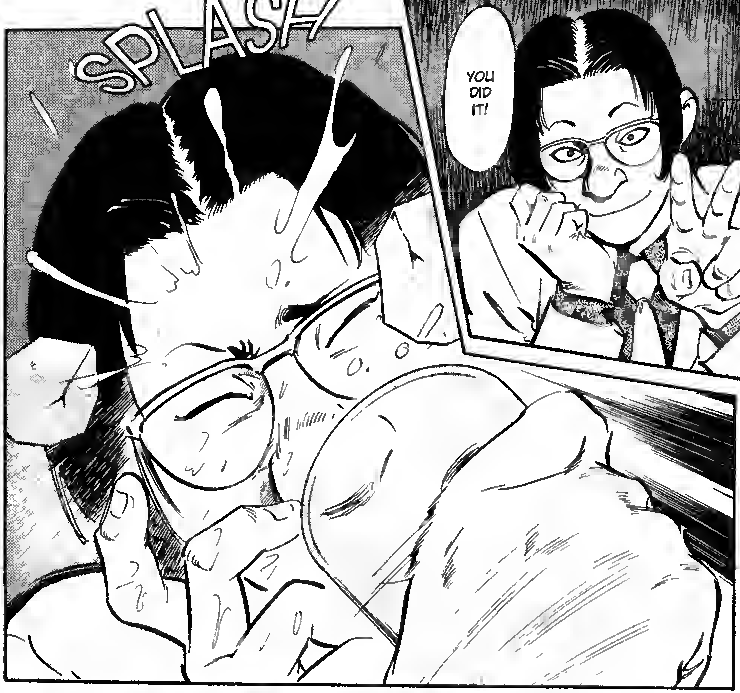
CLAC
AH... GOOD EVENING!
I EVEN HAVE THE RIGHT TO GIVE YOU INFORMATION ...
MISTER DOJIMA CAN'T WAIT...
IT'S RARE TO SEE CUSTOMERS RIGHT AFTER THE OPENING!



CHAPTER 41 : THE CREATURE OF THE APOCALYPSE

DUAH!
I JUST WANTED TO HAVE A DRINK AND GO TO BED RIGHT AWAY...
NICKNAME
POJIMA
I'M SURE TOO OLD TO GO TO PARTIES ANYMORE! I'M DEAD TIRED!

TSUKAM OTO
YES!?
DO YOU THINK HE'LL STAY 'TILL MORNING?
TOK
HUM
YOU'RE RIGHT!
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE BAR TONIGHT! I DON'T THINK THERE'LL BE ANY OTHER CUSTOMERS...
PFF
WE USUALLY CLOSE AT 6AM!
WELL, GOOD NIGHT!
CLAC


SPLASH
YOU DID IT!

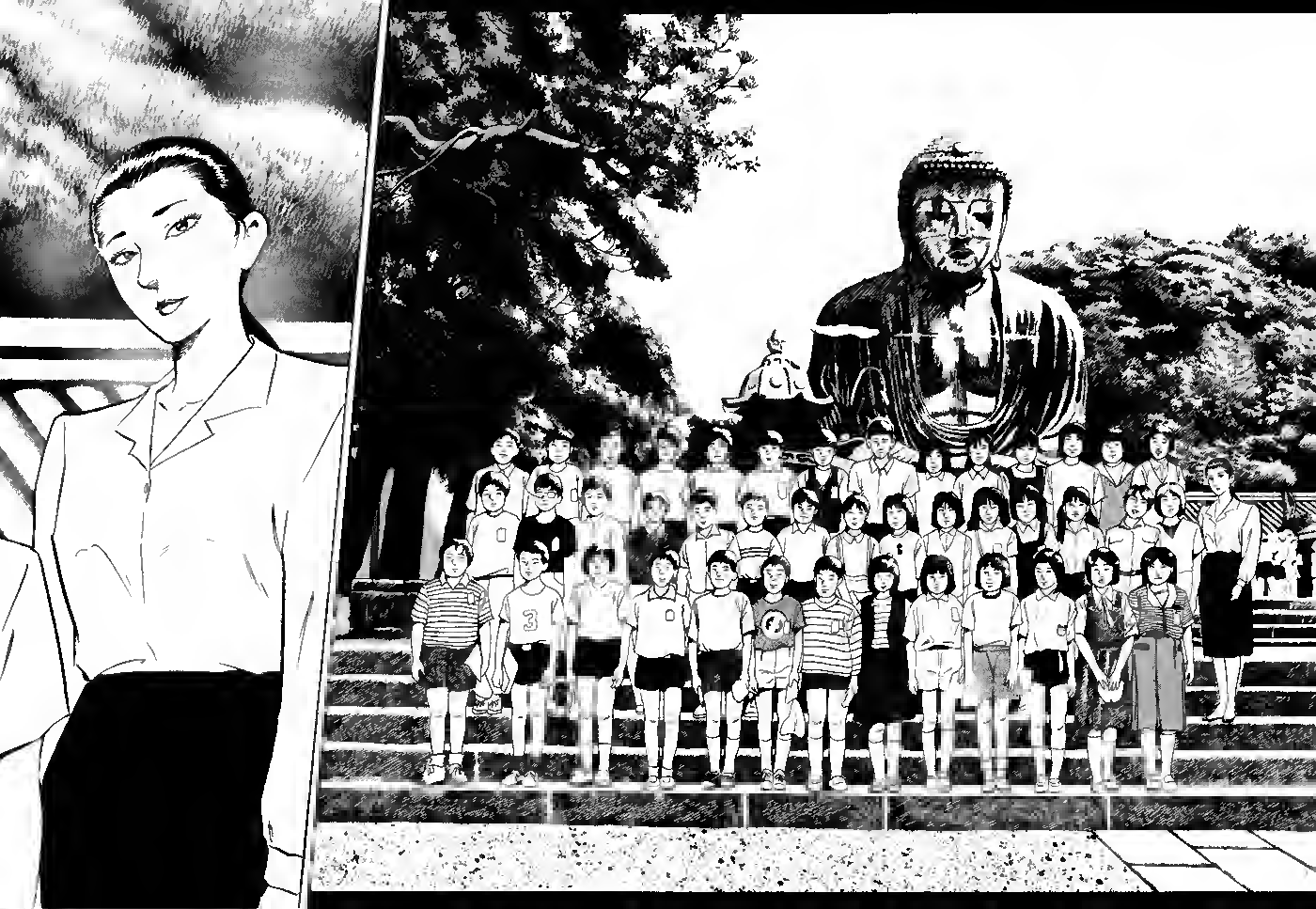
MISTER GOTO, THERE'S NO USE IN TRYING TO PROVOKE ME!
I AIN'T A THUG!

DON'T YOU WANT MORE INFORM- TION!?
CLUES THAT WOULD HELP YOU REMEMBER OF THE LINK BETWEEN YOU AND MISTER DOJIMA...
YOU JUST HAVE TO THINK OF ME AS A MAN WHO CAN PUT YOU ON AN EQUAL FOOTING...
MY ROLE AS A REFEREE... IS TO MAKE THE GAME FAIRER!
IF THINGS DON'T CHANGE, MISTER DOJIMA IS GONNA WIN EASILY, DON'T YOU AGREE!?
COME ON! YOU CAN ASK ME WHATEVER YOU WANT!

DOES IT HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH MY REBEL PERIOD IN HIGH SCHOOL...?
HE TOLD ME WE WERE CLASSMATES
NOTHING!
HE WAS YOUR CLASSMATE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL!

LAST YEAR, CLASS B...
PRIMARY SCHOOL...
BUT YEAH... YOU'VE GOT YOUR YEAR-BOOKS, RIGHT!?
YOU CAN PLACE YOURSELF IN THIS STORY!?
WELL, NOW...
DON'T YOU WANT MORE CLUES?

BOW
LET ME SEE...
BADAM
HM... LAST YEAR, CLASS B...



WHERE ARE YOU IN THIS PICTURE ...?
I'LL TAKE ANOTHER ONE, PLEA-
THE MILDEST YOU GOT!
THERE WERE 42 PUPILS IN CLASS B...
20 GIRLS...

MISTER DOJIMA IS AMONGST THE 22 PUPILS LEFT!

SUCH OLD MEMORIES ..
WHO COULD BE THE ONE WHO FELT SUCH RANCOR TOWARDS ME?

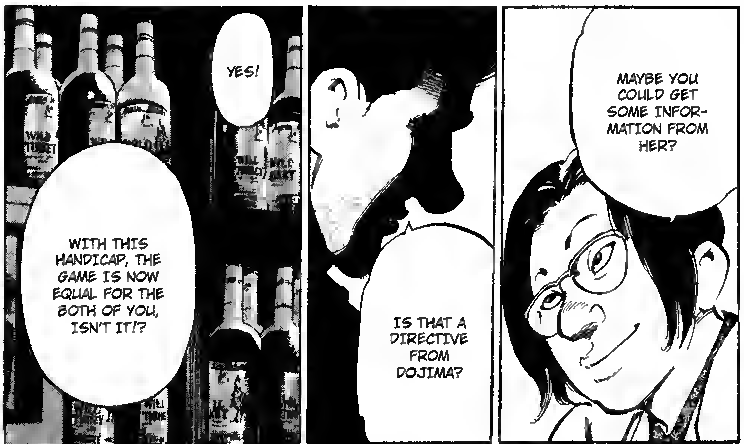
DO YOU KNOW THE WHOLE TRUTH?
WHO DOJIMA REALLY IS?
WHY DID HE LOCK ME UP FOR TEN YEARS?

THERE'S ONLY ONE THING I DON'T KNOW
BOM
OF COURSE!
AN INCIDENT ...?
THAT'S THE ONLY SECRET HE DIDN'T TELL ME!
WHAT INCIDENT YOU CAUSED THAT IN TURN CAUSED P IN DEEP INSIDE MISTER DOJIMA'S BEING!

DO YOU REMEMBER HER? A 20 YEAR-OLD YOUNG WOMAN WAS PRETTY CUTE...
YOUR TEACHER BACK THERE

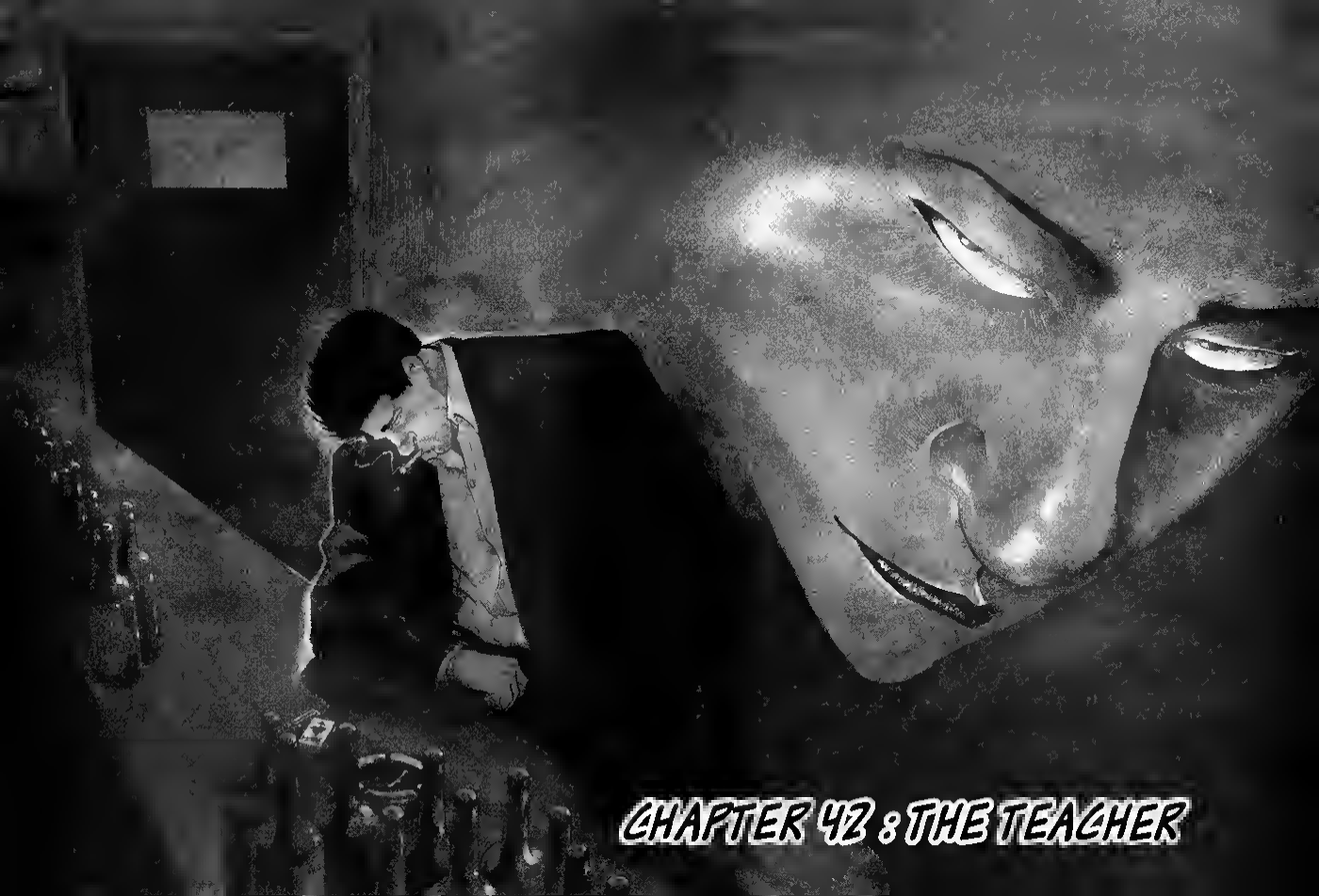
HER NAME WAS MISS KURATA KYOKO KURATA!
HER NAME?
黙示獣
草間やよい
THE CREATURE OF THE APOCALYPSE
YAYOI KUSAMA

SEVERAL YEARS AFTER YOU FINISHED PRIMARY SCHOOL, MISS KURATA HAD PROBLEMS, ESPECIALLY A DIVORCE, AND SHE QUIT HER JOB...
SHE HAS BECOME A FAMOUS DETECTIVE NOVEL WRITER NOW, UNDER THE NICKNAME OF YAYOI KUSAMA!


YES!
WITH THIS HANDICAP, THE GAME IS NOW EQUAL FOR THE BOTH OF YOU, ISN'T IT!?
IS THAT A DIRECTIVE FROM DOJIMA?
MAYBE YOU COULD GET SOME INFORMATION FROM HER?

MOON
DOG

默示獣
草間やよい


CHAPTER 42 : THE TEACHER

默示獣
草間やよい
THE CREATURE OF
THE APOCALYPSE
YAYOI KUSAMA
HOPE

THAT WRITER REALLY MAKES ME DE-SPAIR...
WE HAD A MEETING FOR WORK, BUT HE SAID THAT HE'D RATHER GO TO A BAR!
NEVER MIND, BUT IT WOULD BE BETTER IF THE MONEY WAS USED FOR BETTER PURPOSES!

MISS YAYOI KUSAMA'S MANAGER?
HELLO, EDITORIAL NUMBER 3...
DRING
DRING
A CALL FROM THE SWITCH-BOARD!
MISTER HIRADO!!
BIP
WHAT... YOU MEAN HE'S HERE?
HOW TO CONTACT MISS KUSAMA?
SAY... DOES HE LOOK DANGEROUS?

PLEASE, TAKE A SEAT!
MY NAME'S GOTO!
GOOD MORNING, I'M MISS KUSAMA'S MANAGER, MISTER HIRADO!
HE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A MADMAN, BUT...
FFF...
I'D LIKE YOU TO TELL ME HOW TO CONTACT MISS KUSAMA...
DON'T WASTE MY TIME. WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?

I'D BE GRATEFUL
I FIGURED YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO TELL ME ON THE PHONE, SO THAT'S WHY I CAME HERE!
WE'VE HAD SEVERAL PROBLEMS IN THE PAST...
EVEN THOUGH YOU CAME HERE, WE USUALLY DON'T GIVE OUR WRITERS' PRIVATE INFORMATION TO THEIR FANS...
WELL...
I SEE
OTHERS ARE REAL MYTHO-MANIACS WHO THINK THEIR FAVORITE WRITERS ARE GODS
SOME FANS THINK THEY'VE BEEN USED AS A MODEL FOR CERTAIN HEROES IN THE NOVELS
YOU COULD CALL THEM CHIMERICAL RELATIONSHIPS

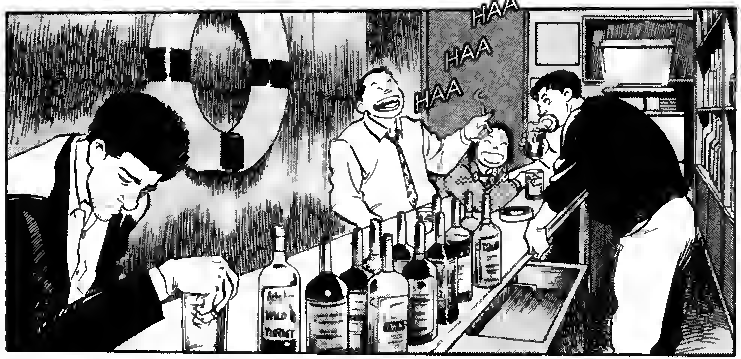
I CAN GIVE HER YOUR LETTER IF YOU WANT
YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE THOSE MADMEN, BUT YOU SHOULD ALREADY KNOW THAT MISS KUSAMA IS FAMOUS FOR BEING HARD TO GET CLOSE TO!
MISTER GOTO, WASN'T IT?
I'D LIKE YOU TO TELL HER ONE THING FOR ME...
TELL HER THAT ONE OF HER OLD PUPILS, SHIN'ICHI GOTO, CAME TO SEE HER!
I'M SORRY
REALLY!

ALSO TELL HER THAT I'VE READ "THE CREATURE OF THE APOCALYPSE," AND I WAS VERY
A PUPIL !?
AT LEAST, NOT UNTIL SHE WON A PRIZE IN LITERATURE...
TO BE HONEST WITH YOU, WE DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT MISS KUSAMA'S PAST!
BUT WHAT IF SHE STILL DOESN'T WANT TO SEE YOU?
OKAY, I'LL GIVE HER A PHONE CALL!
SO, SHE WAS A TEACHER

I'LL GIVE UP!

BUT SHE ASKED ME TO GET YOUR PHONE NUMBER...
I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD EXPECT MUCH
I TOLD HER EVERY-THING!
SO ..!?
03-323

新宿ゴールデン街


HAA
HAA
HAA

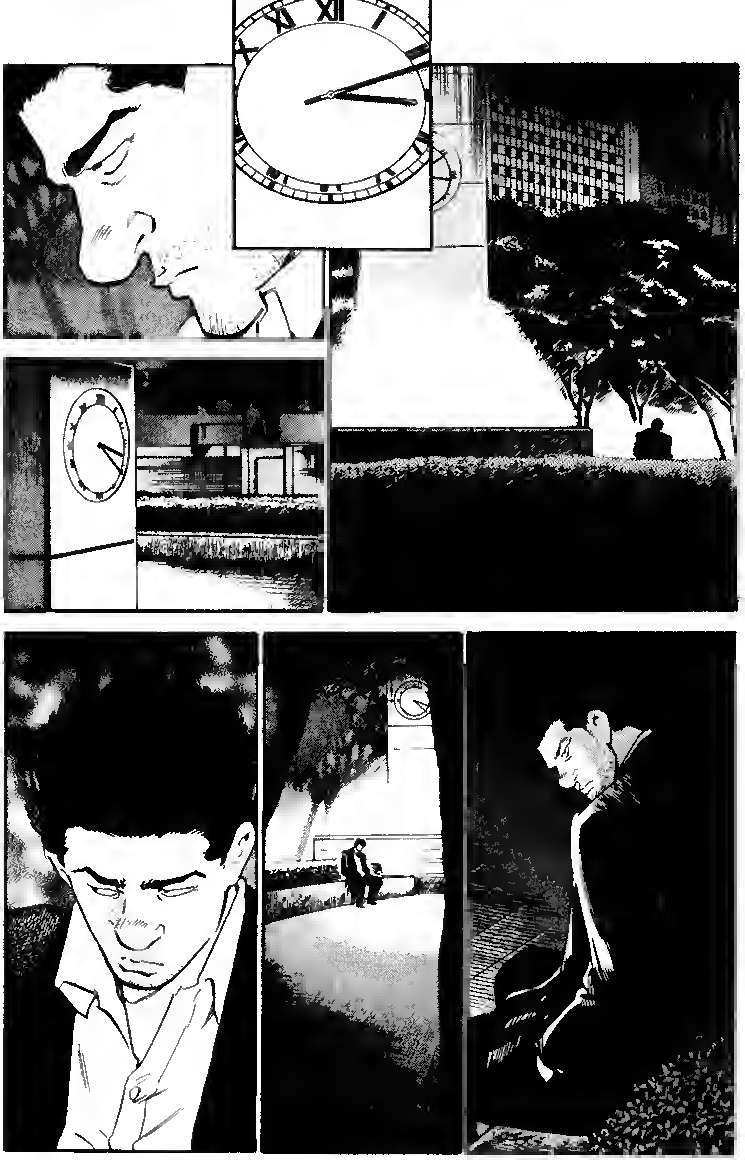
ONE WEEK LATER, WHEN I THOUGHT THE CHANCE TO MEET HER WAS COMPLETELY GONE...

MISTER HIRADO ON THE PHONE
HEY, GOTO!
DRING
DRING
DRING
HELLO
HE WANTS TO TALK TO YOU..

I RECEIVED A FAX IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT FROM MISS KUSAMA
HELLO, MISTER GOTO!?
SHE WROTE THAT SHE'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU AT 3 AM NEAR THE FOUNTAIN AT THE NR FIRM'S PLACE, SHINJUKU STATION'S WEST EXIT..
SHE ALSO WROTE THAT IF YOU DON'T SEE ANYONE AFTER 30 MINUTES, YOU SHOULD GIVE UP..

FFF...
FFF...
FFF...

FFF
FFF
FFF
FFF



TOC
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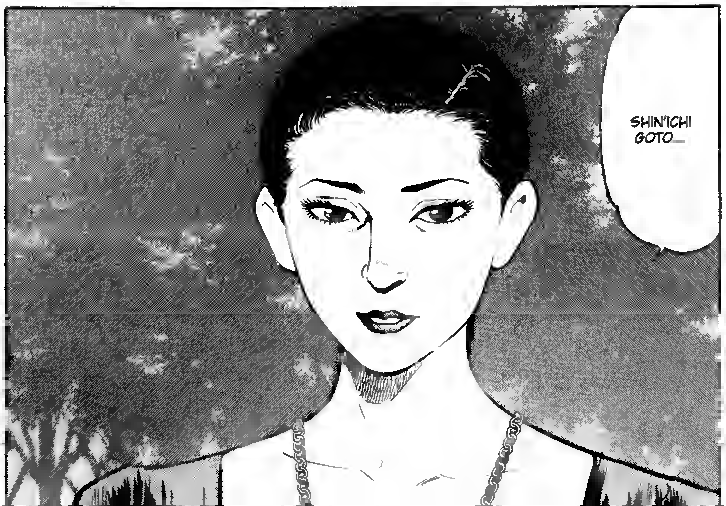

SHIN'ICHI GOTO...

I WANTED TO WATCH YOU FOR A WHILE!
SORRY FOR MAKING YOU WAIT
MISS... KURATA!!
VIUUW
WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE!?
I..
IF YOU HAD BEEN A SIMPLE MAN THAT CONFORMED TO SOCIETY WITHOUT THINKING AT ALL, I WOULD'VE GONE BACK HOME WITHOUT REVEALING MYSELF TO YOU!
PFF..

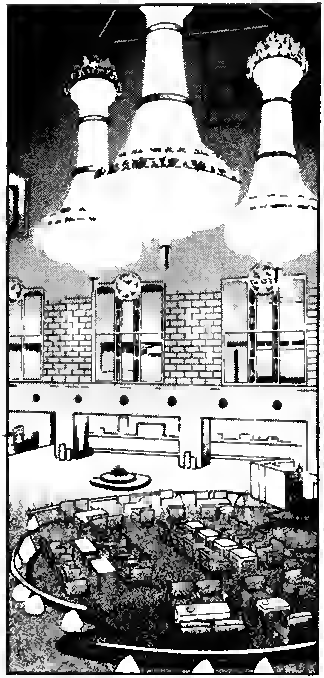
IT'S PRETTY SEXY, YOU KNOW!

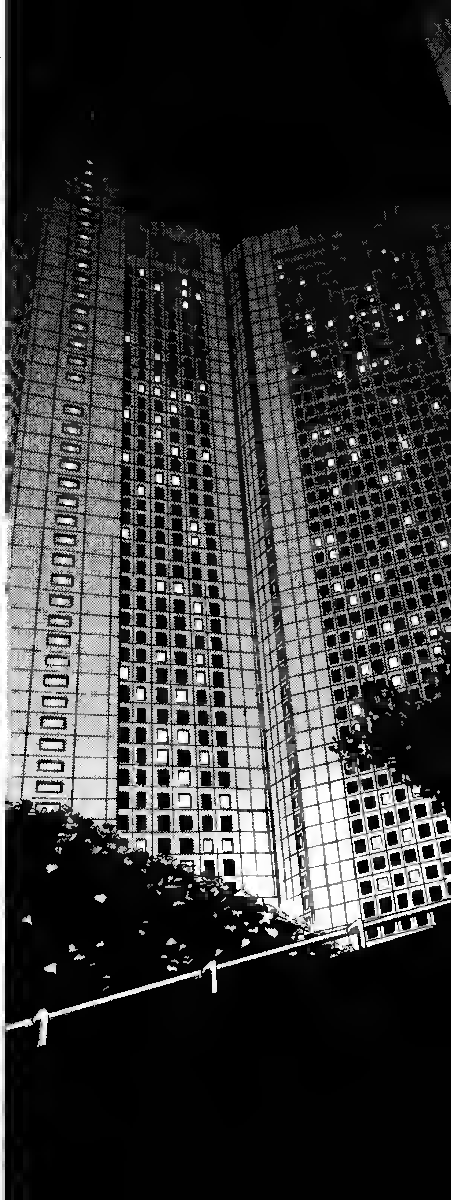
YOU LOOK LIKE A HERO THAT CAME OUT OF MY NOVELS
WITH THE FACE OF A BEAST WHO STANDS THERE TRYING TO OVER-COME A STUPID SORROW

CHAPTER 43 :
YAYOI KUSAMA

I READ YOUR BOOK
WHY DID YOU WANT TO MEET ME?
I HAVE A FEELING THAT THERE'S A MORE IMPORTANT REASON BEHIND THIS
SO YOU READ THE BOOK BY YOUR OLD TEACHER AND YOU DECIDED TO MEET HER?
WERE YOU FOLLOWED?

VROUM
WHY DO YOU THINK I'VE BEEN FOLLOWED...!?
DO YOU HAVE A SPECIAL SENSE OF SMELL JUST LIKE THE CREATURES OF HELL...!?
I'M NOT THE PURE AND INNOCENT YOUNG TEACHER YOU KNEW ANYMORE!
YOU'RE GONNA TELL ME EVERYTHING!





WHAT'RE YOU AFRAID OF?
YOU THINK I'M A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN WHO'S LED BY HER SEXUAL DESIRE...?

TCHAC
YES... WHAT A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT!

GET US SOMETHING TO DRINK FROM THE MINIBAR!
TAP
TAP
TONIC
CLIC
TURN THE LIGHT OFF!

COME ON!
CRSH
CRSH

AT THAT TIME

THE CLASS YOU WERE ASSIGNED TO... DO YOU REMEMBER IF ONE OF MY CLASSMATES...
COULD'VE FELT AN ENDLESS RANCOR AGAINST ME...?
WRITING ESSAYS
GOING ON TV SHOWS
AND SELLING NOVELS THAT TRY TO REVEAL MY PRIVATE LIFE, THAT'S NOT MY STYLE!
I WAS SURE
THAT'S WHY I'M SURE PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE PAST OF THE WRITER, YAYOI KUSAMA, WHOSE BOOK HAS SOLD MORE THAN 3000 COPIES!

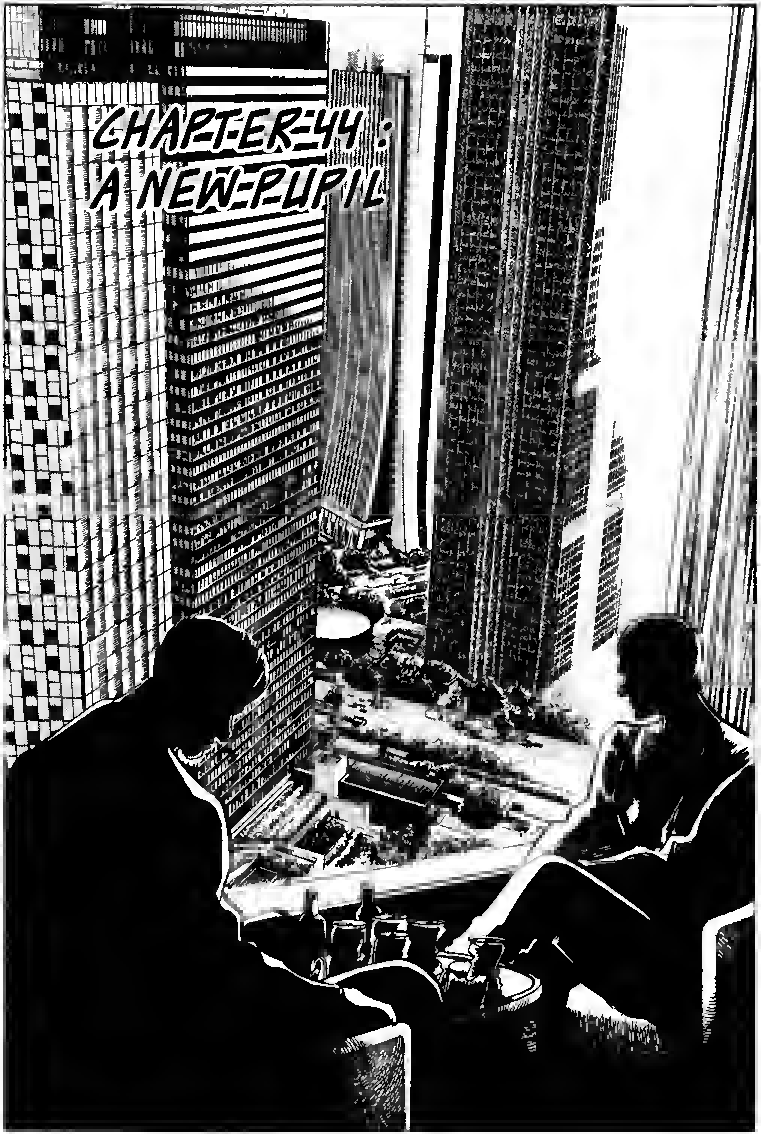
SO, WHO GAVE YOU THIS INFORMATION?
GOTO.
TELL ME EVERYTHING ABOUT WHAT YOU'VE BEEN GOING THROUGH!

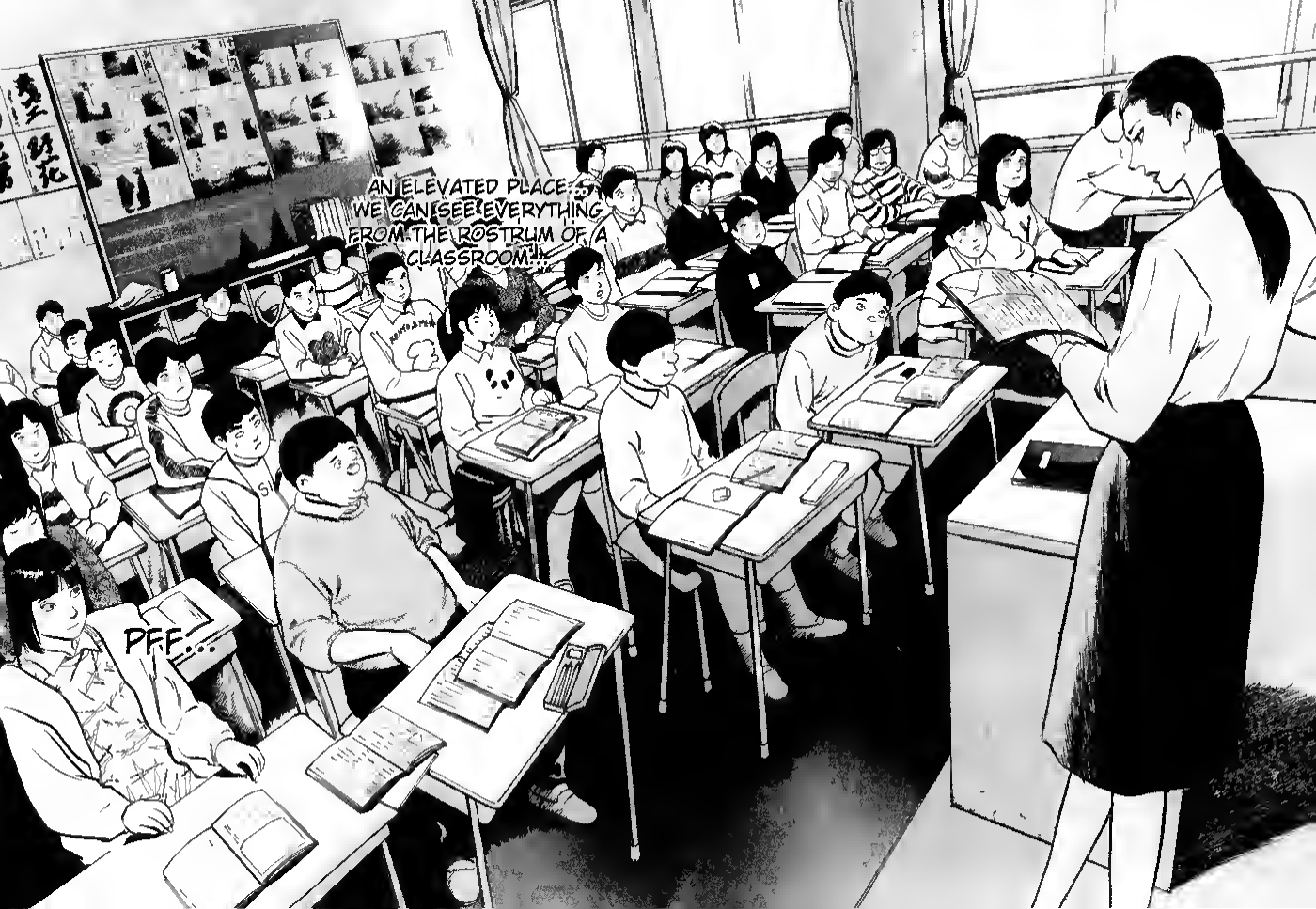
BELL'S
FINEST
SCOTCH WHISKY
NICKNAME :
OJIMA
1025

HM... DOJIMA ...
YES.
HE TOLD YOU THAT YOU BOTH WERE STUDENTS IN MY CLASS?
I THINK I WAS AN ORDINARY TEENAGER MAYBE A BIT TOO SURE OF MYSELF...
I THINK THAT'S STILL THE CASE NOWADAYS ...
I'M ASKING YOU TO REMEMBER THINGS THAT HAPPENED 23 YEARS AGO... DO YOU REMEMBER ANYONE THAT COULD BE THAT MAN?

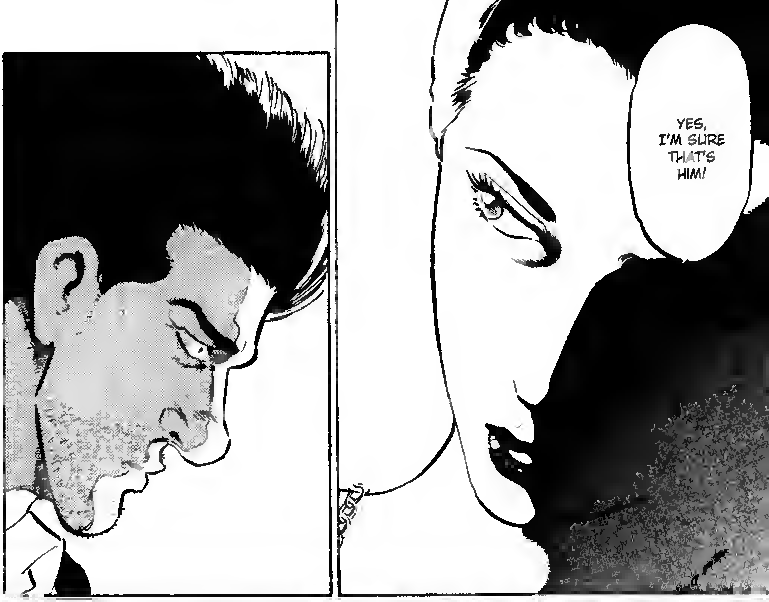
SO WHAT COULD BE THE REASON FOR SUCH A MAN TO HUNT ME DOWN LIKE THIS?
THIS ABSURDITY IS MORE COMMON AMONG WRITERS...
WHY...?
I WONDER IF THAT MAN HARBORS SOME KIND OF HATRED TOWARDS ME...
CRSH

THAT GUY IS LIKE A VALVE TO SOCIETY... HE ACCEPTS BAD ARTISTS, WRITERS, YAKUZA, AND MURDERERS, BUT...
I THINK... HE WAS REALLY SCARED OF FACING AN OUTSIDER LIKE YOU!


CHAPTER 4:
A NEW PUPIL


AN ELEVATED PLACE... WE CAN SEE EVERYTHING FROM THE ROSTRUM OF A CLASSROOM...
PFF...

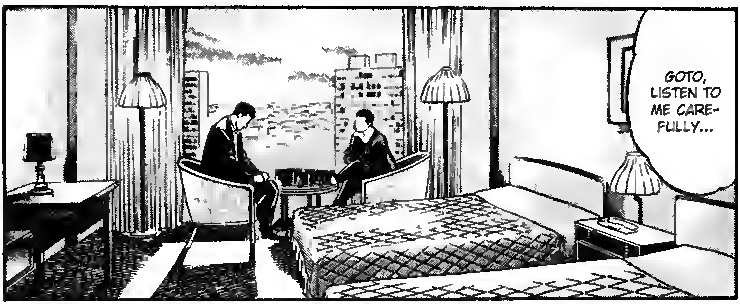
KIDS WHO ARE ALREADY PREOCCUPIED BY SEXUAL DESIRE...
SOCIAL ORIGINS OF EACH PUPIL...
LOVE STORIES BETWEEN PUPILS...
SO... DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHO DOJIMA COULD BE...?


YES, I'M SURE THAT'S HIM!

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT...
I'VE NEVER MET A PUPIL WITH SUCH A SINISTER AURA IN ALL MY CAREER...

WHAT'S THE NAME OF THAT PUPIL ...?
DO YOU THINK YOU WILL FIND THE ANSWER TO ALL THIS IF I GIVE YOU HIS NAME?
YOU WOULD BE THE WINNER OF A GAME
THAT WOULD END WITH DOJIMA'S SUICIDE?

DO YOU FEEL ECSTASY ?
IS THE FOG LIFTING ?
WHAT'LL YOUR LIFE BECOME NEXT ...?


GOTO, LISTEN TO ME CAREFULLY...

WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE MAN WHO DIDN'T HESITATE TO SPEND 300 MILLION YEN TO LOCK YOU UP FOR TEN YEARS!
YOU MUST NOT FORGET THIS "OBSCURE DETAIL"...

IF YOU HAD NOT EXI-STED ...
HE WOULDN'T HAVE HAD TO DOUBT HIS VIEW OF LIFE IN WHICH THE WORLD WAS BASED ON PERVERTED DESIRES!
IT MUST BE SOME KIND OF GROSS SUCCESS... FINALLY, THAT MAN, CONTENT WITH MONEY, HIS SOCIAL POSITION, AND HIS DOUBTFUL INTENTS...
...WILL ALWAYS FEEL AN EMBAR-RASSMENT, A WOUND OR A SHAME ALL HIS LIFE!

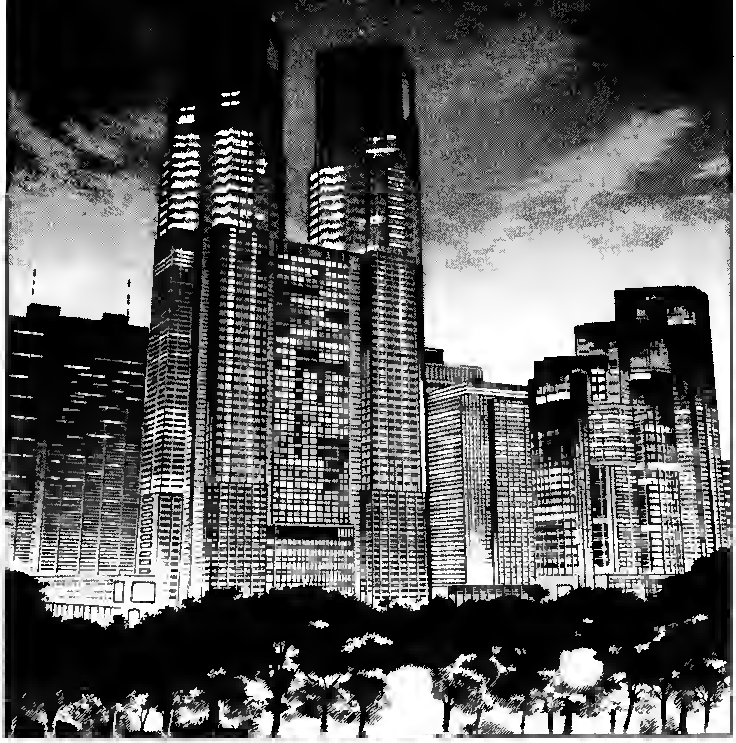
I THINK HE TRIES TO MAKE YOU EXPERIENCE THE SAME SITUATION, TO MAKE YOU AN INHABITANT OF A WORLD WITHOUT A WAY OUT!
YES...
...SO IT'S AN ENDLESS STORY!

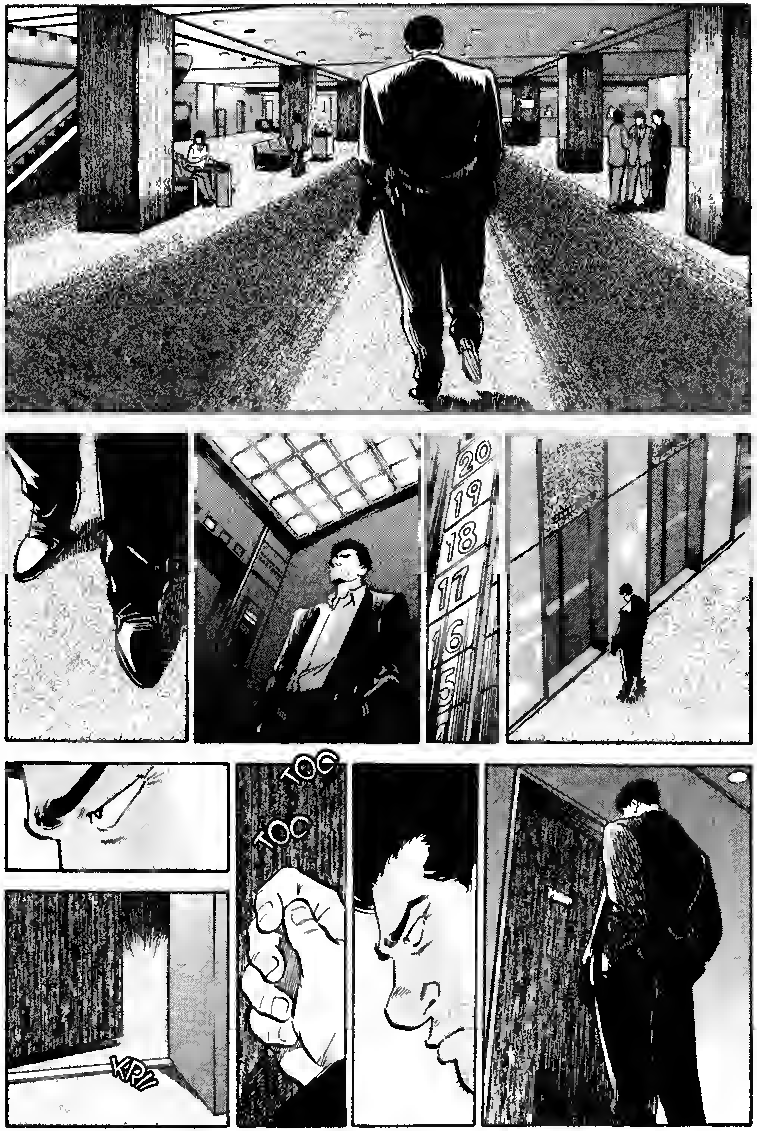
YES!
DOJIMA'S REFEREE TOLD YOU WE HAD TO THINK ABOUT IT TOGETHER...?
WHY DO YOU THINK WE'RE CHATTING HERE?
BECAUSE HE CAN'T SPY ON US IN A GREAT HOTEL ROOM!
WHAT SHOULD WE DO NOW?

CAN WE SEE EACH OTHER... TONIGHT?
I'M A WRITER, AFTER ALL!
SORRY, BUT I DIDN'T SLEEP IN THREE DAYS!
OUAH
HE'LL LEAD THE GAME UNTIL WE FIND OUT WHAT THE REASONS BEHIND HIS RANCOR ARE!
BUT THERE'S A FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM LEFT...
I'LL TELL YOU WHO DOJIMA IS!
..
WE'LL TRY TO REMEMBER THIS LATER TONIGHT!

I FEEL SLEEPY
BOM

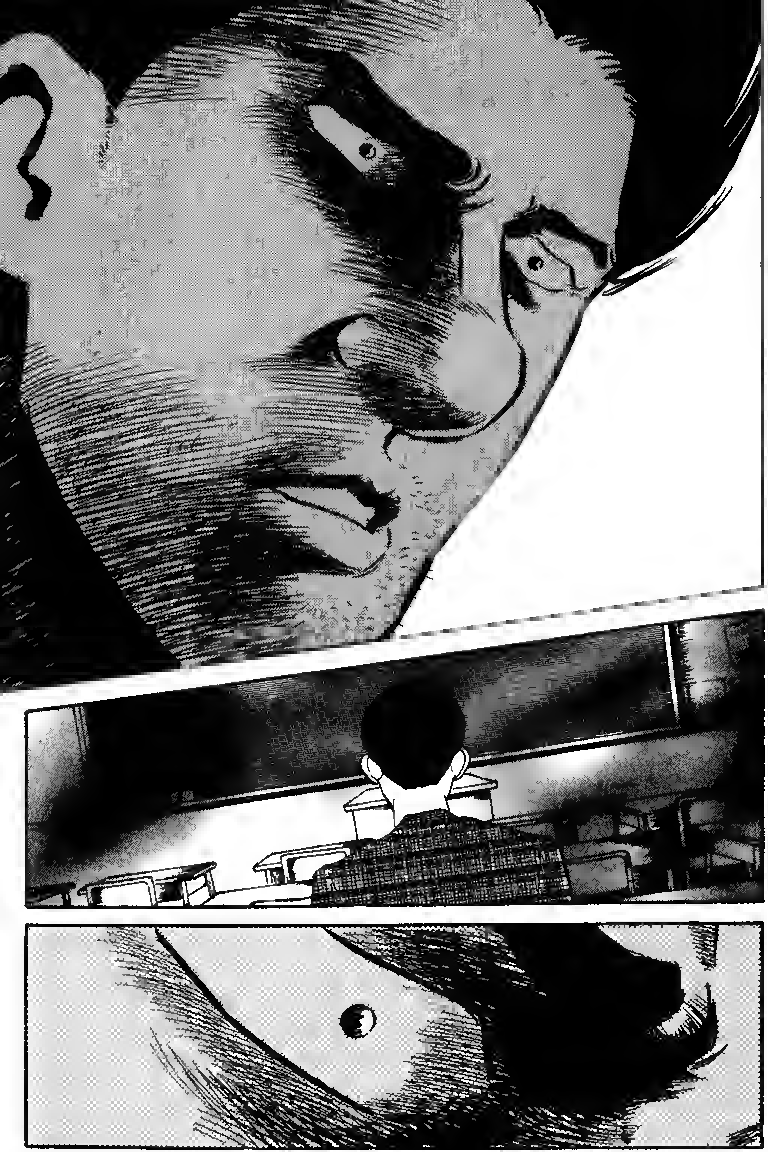
RRR
RRR

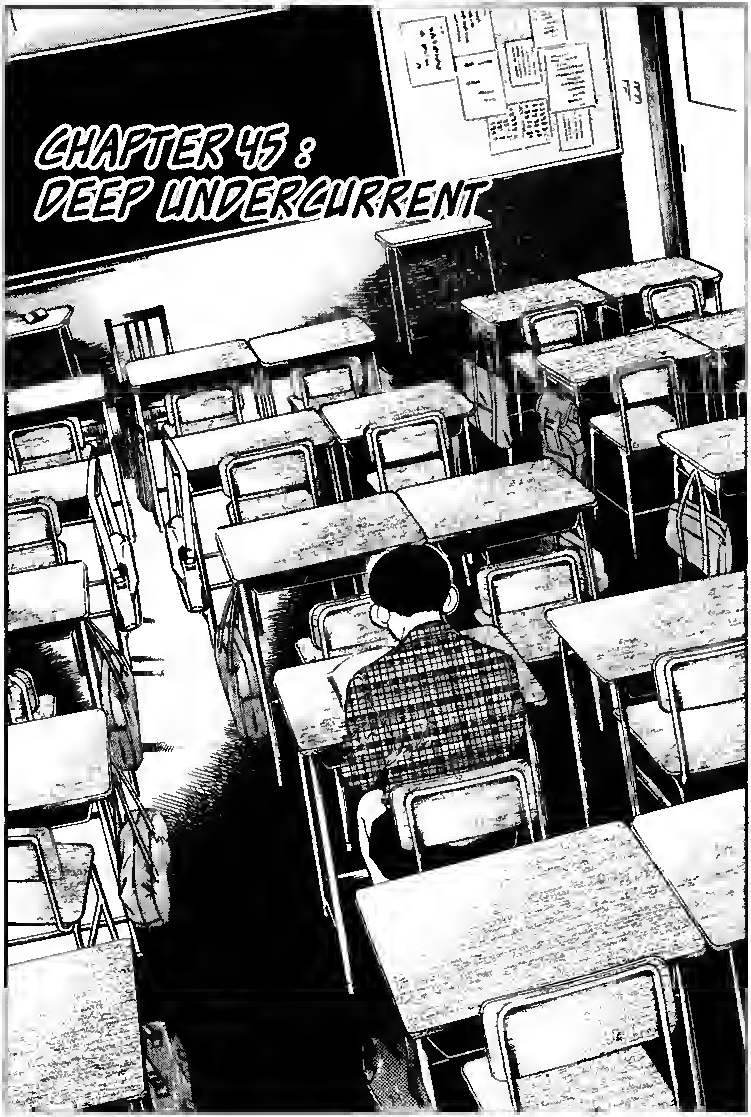



20
19
18
17
16
15
TOC
TOC
KRK

I SLEPT ALL DAY LONG ...
BUT I STILL TRIED TO PUT ON SOME MAKEUP ...

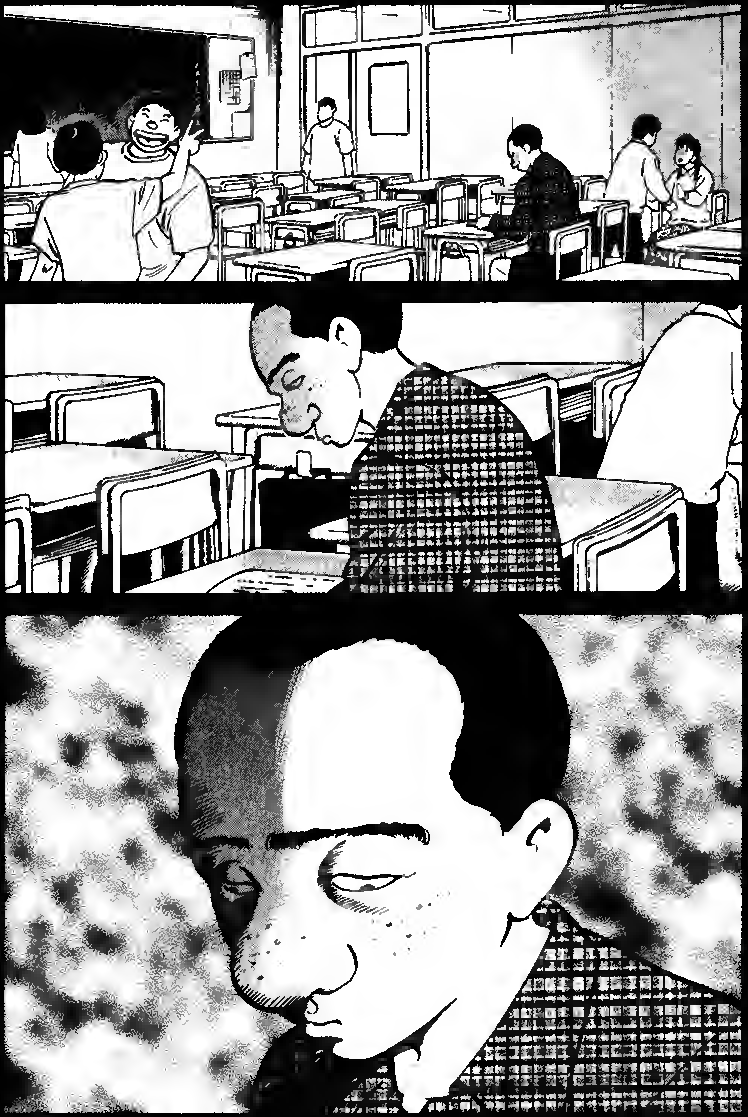
I AIN'T A TALKATIVE GUY...
MIND IF WE GET TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER!?
WHO IS THE GUY THAT HATES ME SO MUCH...?
THE NAME OF THE PUPIL WHO EMITTED A BAD AURA?
SUMMER HOLIDAYS JUST ENDED...
AND A NEW PUPIL ARRIVED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TERM...




CHAPTER 45 :
DEEP UNDERCURRENT

TAKAAKI
KAKINUMA
...

YES!



AN EVENT THAT COULD HAVE CAUSED TAKAAKI'S RESENT-MENT...
DO YOU REMEM-BER SO-METHING SPECIAL?
DON'T YOU FORGET THINGS?
EVERYTHING BLURS WITH TIME, YOU KNOW...
ARE THE MEMO-RIES OF HUMAN BEINGS REALLY RELIABLE?
HOW COULD THAT BE POSSIBLE? I'VE NEVER TALKED TO HIM!!

MAYBE YOU IGNORED HIM?
I'VE LOST THE LITTLE TRUST THAT I HAD IN MYSELF
...
...
I DIDN'T TELL YOU YESTERDAY BECAUSE I WANTED TO THINK ABOUT IT SOME MORE!
FFF... TRUE, YOU WEREN'T THAT KIND OF BOY!
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

I'M 100% SURE DOJIMA AND TAKAAKI ARE THE SAME PERSON...
BUT I HAVE NO IDEA WHY HE HATES YOU THAT MUCH!
I SEARCHED MY MEMORY TO SEE IF I COULD REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED IN THE SIX MONTHS AFTER TAKAAKI'S ARRIVAL.
GLOU GLOU
COME ON, LET'S DRINK SOME MORE!
CRSH!
BUT THIS DOESN'T MEAN I'VE GIVEN UP YET!
ALCOHOL WILL CLARIFY OUR THOUGHTS, AND THEN WE'LL TRY TO FIND THE REASONS BEHIND THIS PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER!

AT THE END OF PRIMARY SCHOOL YOU ENROLLED IN A PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL
WHEREAS HE ENTERED A PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOL THAT SPECIALIZED IN EDUCATING THE FUTURE STUDENTS OF [illegible] UNIVERSITY...
NO!
DID YOU MEET HIM AFTERWARDS?
SINCE THEN, I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING ABOUT HIM ANYMORE!
I QUIT MY JOB THE YEAR AFTER DUE TO SEVERAL PROBLEMS, LIKE MY DIVORCE...
I'M SURE THAT'S NOT THE CASE!
MAYBE SOMEONE TOLD YOU ABOUT HIM, OR YOU COULD'VE MET HIM IN THE STREET...?

LESSONS, AFTER THE CLASS, TRIPS ...!!
COME ON, TRY TO REMEMBER ...
SO IT'S ONLY THOSE SIX MONTHS THAT WE SPENT TOGETHER!
IT'S LIKE EVERYONE WAS AVOIDING HIM ON PURPOSE...
INDEED HE WAS ONE OF THE TOP STUDENTS BUT HE EMITTED A FEELING OF DISAFFECTION...
LIKE HE WAS AN OLD EXCHANGE BROKER ONLY INTERESTED IN HIS STOCKS!

AT THAT TIME, I ALWAYS TRIED NOT TO THINK ABOUT HIM, BUT...
I REMEMBER SOMETHING!
HUH...!?
HIS STRANGE AURA DISTURBED ME AND MY BRAIN WAS LIKE THAT OF A CHILD THAT DIDN'T WORK ANYMORE, LIKE SOMEONE HAD PRESSED THE "OFF" BUTTON...
EXPLAIN YOURSELF
WITH HATRED OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT
IT HAS NOTHING TO DO

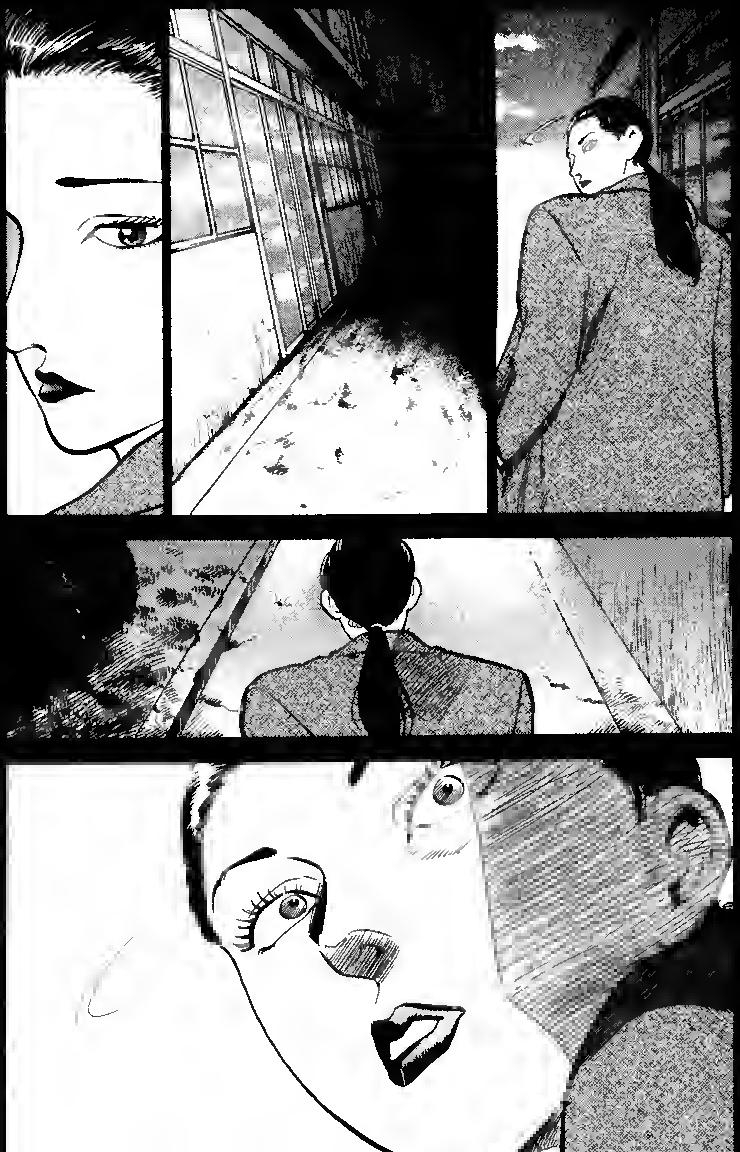
IF WE COMPARE BOTH YOUR BRAINS USING A COMPUTER, THIS ONE IS OUT OF ORDER BECAUSE OF AN IMPOSSIBLE ANALYSIS
...EVERY TIME YOU TRY TO UNDERSTAND THE FEELINGS OF THAT CHILD AM I WRONG?
I TRIED TO PUT MYSELF IN THE SAME MENTAL STATE
I THINK I FINALLY UNDERSTAND

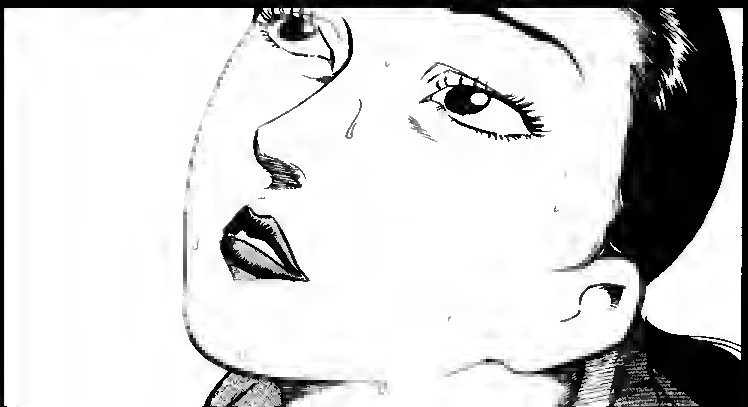
WHEREAS ALL THE OTHER PUPILS WERE KEEPING THEMSELVES OUT OF TAKAAKI'S WAY BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T LIKE HIS OBSCURE AURA
YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE WHO CARED THAT TAKAAKI KAKINUMA EXISTED!

YOU MUST HAVE LOCKED THIS MEMORY DEEP INSIDE YOU IF YOU COULDN'T REMEMBER IT TONIGHT!

AN EVENT I HAVE KEPT SECRET UNTIL NOW...
MAY I TELL YOU SOMETHING?

IT HAPPENED IN DECEMBER, THE YEAR I WAS YOUR TEACHER...





I HAVE NO PROOF THAT IT WAS HIM ...
BUT I'M CONVINCED THAT IT WAS!

CHAPTER 46 :
AN OMNISCIENT GLANCE

DID HE WANT TO KILL ME!? OR MAYBE IT WAS JUST A WARNING!?
WHATEVER, THE PARPEN FELL INTO THE FLOWER BED NEXT TO ME
I DIDN'T TELL THE DIRECTOR
I NEVER TOLD ANYONE ABOUT IT!
WHY IS THAT ...!?
WELL... I'M ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO HAVE TROUBLE ADAPTING THEMSELVES TO SOCIETY...
A LITTLE BIT LIKE THE FACT THAT I COULDN'T BECOME A WRITER...
THAT KID MAY HAVE GUESSED
MY FEELINGS AND TENDENCIES AT THAT TIME!

GOTO...
I HAVE TO TELL YOU SOME-THING ...
I WAS FASCINATED BY THAT KID... TAKAAKI KAKINUMA...!
AND IT WAS MORE THAN JUST A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A TEACHER AND A TROUBLED KID ...
AT THAT TIME... I WAS SUFFERING FROM MARRIAGE PROBLEMS... MY HUSBAND AND I HATED EACH OTHER...

IT WAS LIKE THAT KID KNEW ABOUT IT...

"THESE PAST DAYS, YOU'RE MORE SEVERE IN CLASS BECAUSE YOU WANT TO RUN AWAY FROM REALITY AND FORGET YOUR MESSED UP MARRIAGE!"
"HIS GLANCE... IT WAS LIKE HE WAS TELLING ME..."

IT ANNOYED ME, BECAUSE IT WAS THE TRUTH!
AND THEN?
I USELESSLY TORMENTED MYSELF IN ORDER TO BELIEVE THAT A KID IN PRIMARY SCHOOL COULDN'T UNDERSTAND THOSE THINGS!
I WAS PROBABLY IMAGINING THINGS... MAYBE IT WAS JUST A DREAM, OR I WAS UPSET...
I REALIZED SOMETHING!
AND THEN, ONE DAY WHEN I WAS SUFFERING FROM MY PERIOD...

I TOLD MYSELF THAT A KID LIKE HIM SHOULD DIE IN A CAR CRASH!

BUT I THOUGHT OF SUCH THINGS ONLY ONCE!
I WAS STRAIGHTER!
WHEN YOU WERE PROTECTING YOURSELF BY PUSHING THE OFF BUTTON OF YOUR BRAIN...
THE DAY WHEN THE PARPEN FELL..
THAT WAS THE EVENING!
YES!

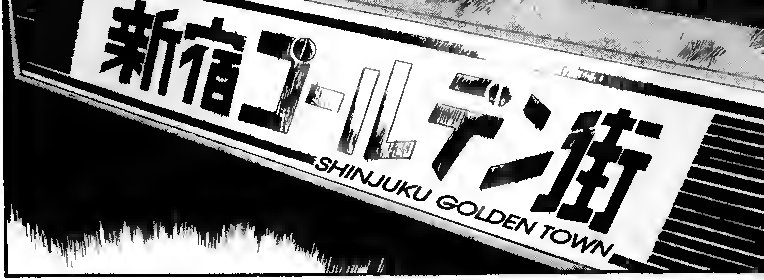
SOMETHING OBVIOUSLY HAPPENED
WELL... YOU'LL HAVE TO OPEN YOUR MEMORY'S BLACK BOX IN WHICH YOU LOCKED TAKAAKI KAKINUMA FOR 23 YEARS!

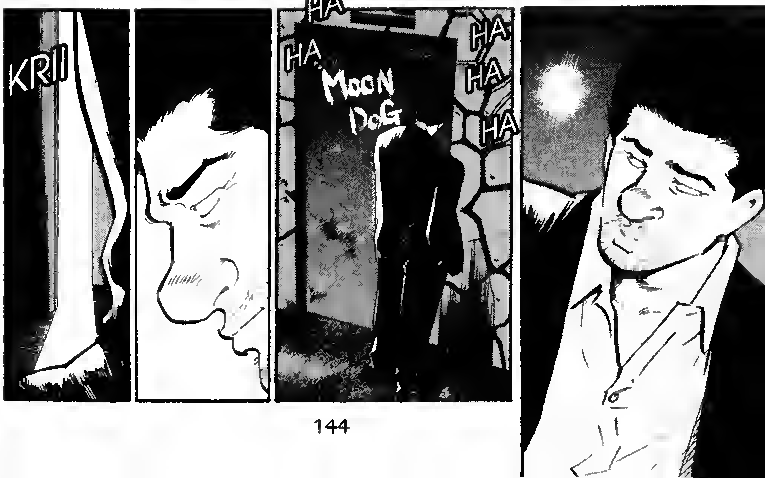
I'VE GOT SOME FRAGMENTS OF MEMORIES FROM THAT TIME...
I REMEMBER CLEARLY WHAT TAKAAKI LOOKED LIKE...
BUT I CAN'T REMEMBER WHY HE HATES ME THAT MUCH!
THAT'S THE PROBLEM RIGHT NOW...
MAYBE YOU NEED MORE TIME?
HERE'S MY OFFICE PHONE NUMBER!
IF YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING, OR IF HE SHOWS UP...
CALL ME FROM A PUBLIC PHONE!
GOT IT!
CRASH

THANKS TO THAT, WE WERE ABLE TO FIGURE OUT THAT DOJIMA AND TAKAAKI KAKINUMA ARE THE SAME PERSON!
DOJIMA'S MESSENGER, THE ONE WHO CALLED HIMSELF A REFEREE, HE ADVISED YOU TO ASK ME FOR HELP, IS THAT RIGHT?
GOTO...
I THINK IT'S A TRAP...
...
WHY DID HE CHANGE THE RULES TO REVEAL THIS SO EASILY...?
NO DOUBT IT'S A FEINT TO MAKE YOU ENTER... NO, TO MAKE US ENTER INTO AN EVEN MORE COMPLICATED LABYRINTH!

ALL THE ASPECTS OF THIS PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER... UNTIL WE FIND OUT WHY HE HATES YOU, WE'D BETTER NOT REVEAL HIS TRUE NAME!

THAT MEANS WE'RE GOING INTO OVER-TIME!?

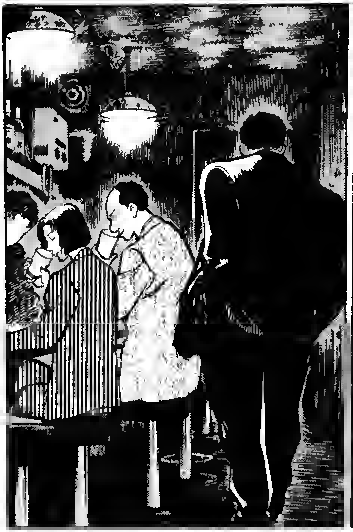

新宿ゴールデン街
SHINJUKU GOLDEN TOWN


KRII
HA
HA
MOON
DOG
HA
HA
HA

YOUR GUESTS ARE WAITING!!
GOOD EVENING!

HIS GLANCE,
IT'S LIKE..

CHAPTER 47 : SUSPICION



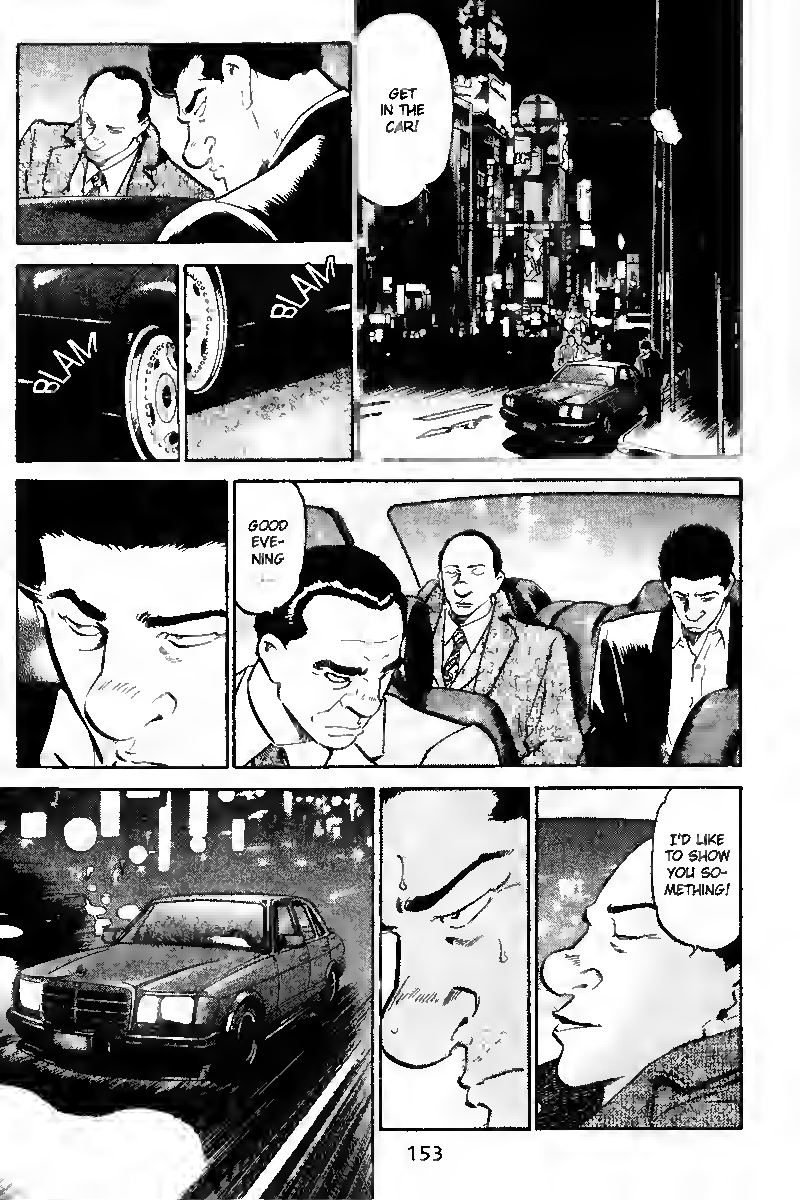
I THINK IT'S A TRAP ...
TO MAKE US ENTER AN EVEN MORE COMPLICATED LABYRINTH...
CALM DOWN ...
I HAVE TO CALM DOWN...
GOTO ..

HOW'S OUR OLD TEACHER?
HA
HA
HA
HYAAA... TH, T'S GREAT!!
WE CAN'T TALK ABOUT THAT HERE!
HUH!?
BARMAN, MAY I BORROW GOTO FOR A WHILE!?

CLAC
I'D LIKE TO CHALLENGE HIM TO A BRAND NEW VIDEO GAME...
PLEASE, DO!
BLAM

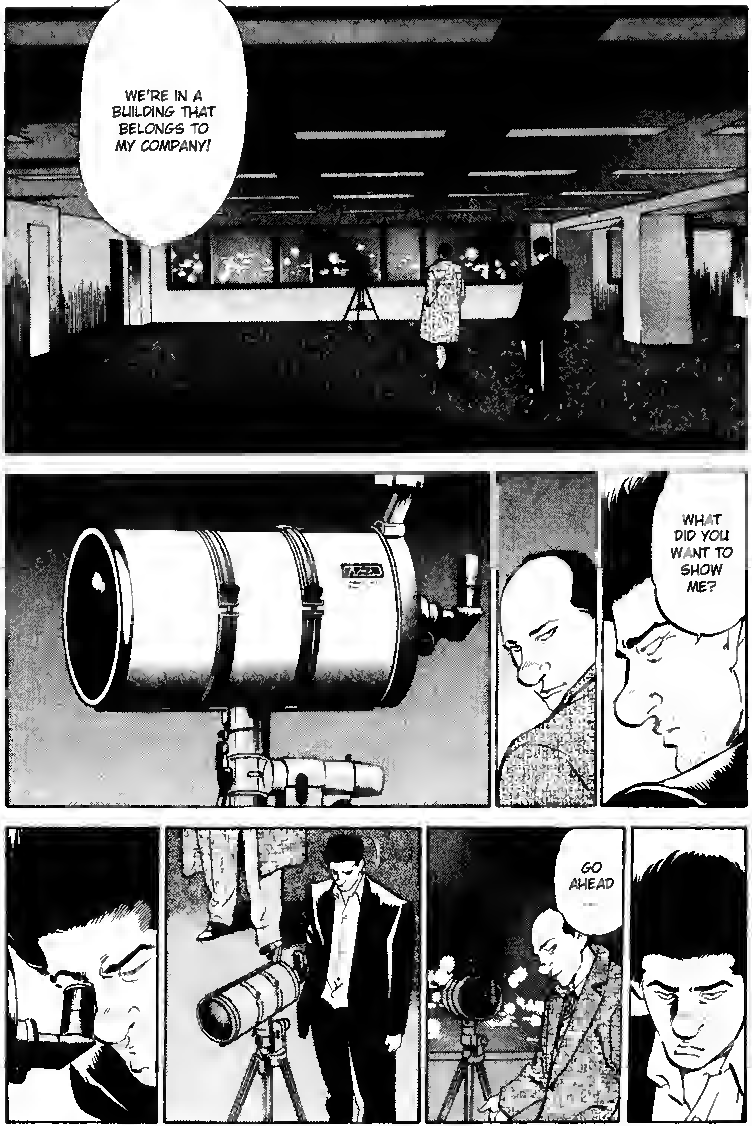
I WOULD HAVE NEVER THOUGHT MISTER DOJIMA WAS A VIDEO GAME FAN...
THAT'S REALLY SURPRISING...
MY BOSS HAS VARIOUS TASTES!

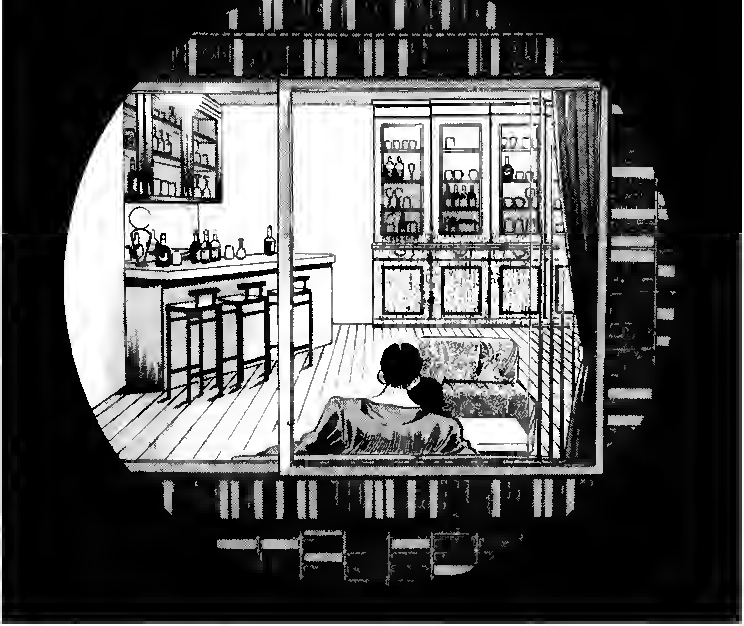
キリ
大臣
基
WWW

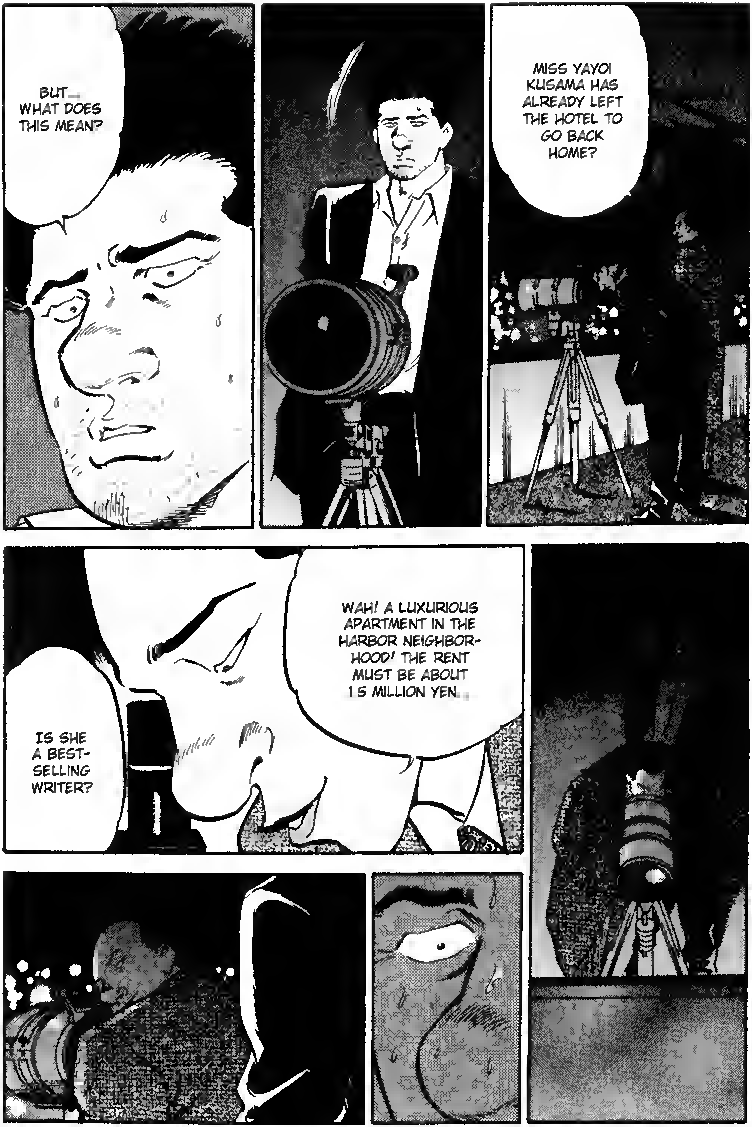

GET IN THE CAR!
BLAM
BLAM
GOOD EVE-NING
I'D LIKE TO SHOW YOU SO-METHING!

CRW

GOOD EVENING.
CRAC

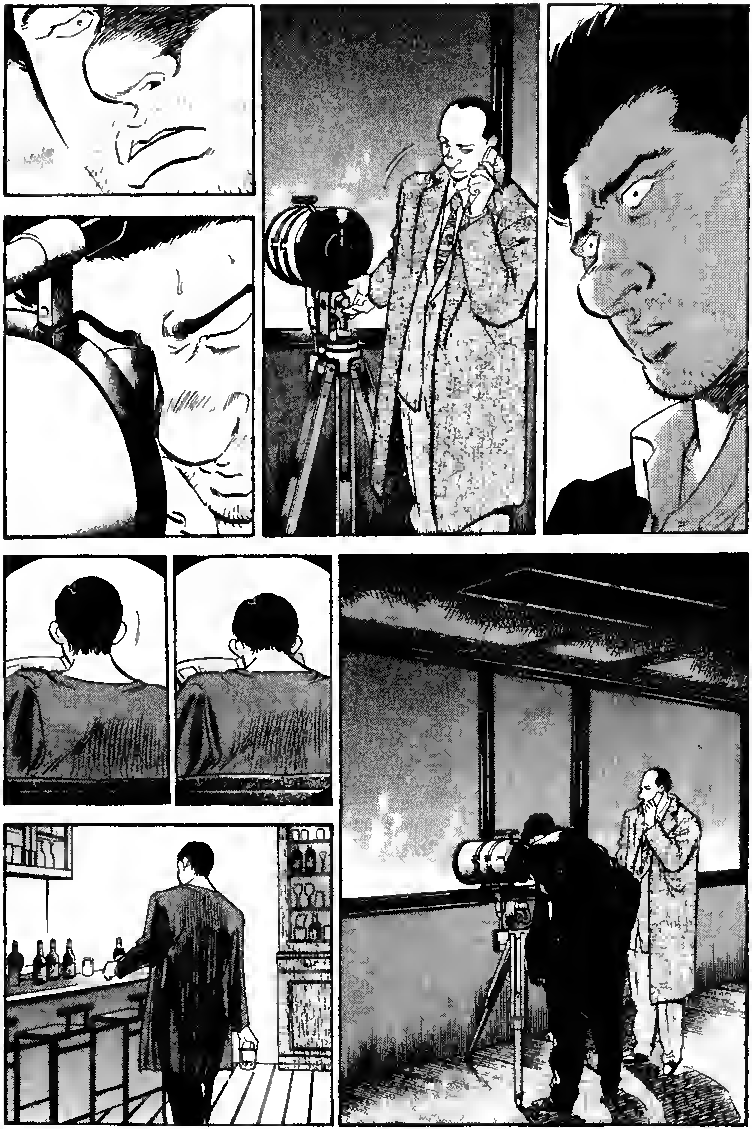

WE'RE IN A BUILDING THAT BELONGS TO MY COMPANY!
WHAT DID YOU WANT TO SHOW ME?
GO AHEAD




BUT... WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?
MISS YAYOI KUSAMA HAS ALREADY LEFT THE HOTEL TO GO BACK HOME?
WAH! A LUXURIOUS APARTMENT IN THE HARBOR NEIGHBORHOOD! THE RENT MUST BE ABOUT 15 MILLION YEN.
IS SHE A BEST-SELLING WRITER?

LET'S DO A LITTLE CALCULATION OF ROYALTIES...
SHE HAS PRODIGIOUS TALENT, BUT I DON'T THINK A SINGLE BOOK THAT SHE'S WRITTEN HAS BEEN SOLD ENOUGH TO NEED REPRINTING!?
I DON'T THINK SHE HAS A RICH LOVER EITHER
SO, HOW COME SHE CAN LEAD SUCH A LUXURIOUS WAY OF LIFE?
10% OF 3000 COPIES CALCULATES THE ROYALTIES!
360000..
A HARDCOVER VERSION OF THE "CREATURE OF THE APOCALYPSE" COSTS 1200 YEN.
THE CREATURE OF THE APOCALYPSE
YAYOI KUSAMA

HA
HA
HA
YOU'D BETTER ASK HER ON THE PHONE!
OKAY
THEN I'LL DO IT MYSELF!
BIP
BIP



MISS KUSAMA, SORRY TO CALL YOU IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT
IT'S ME!

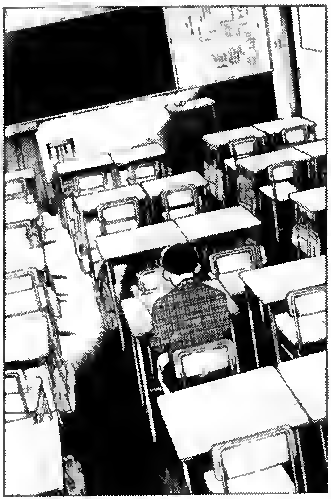
HOW'S YOUR WORK GOING?
SEE YOU SOON, BYE!
I THINK I'LL COME TO SEE YOU SOON!
BIP

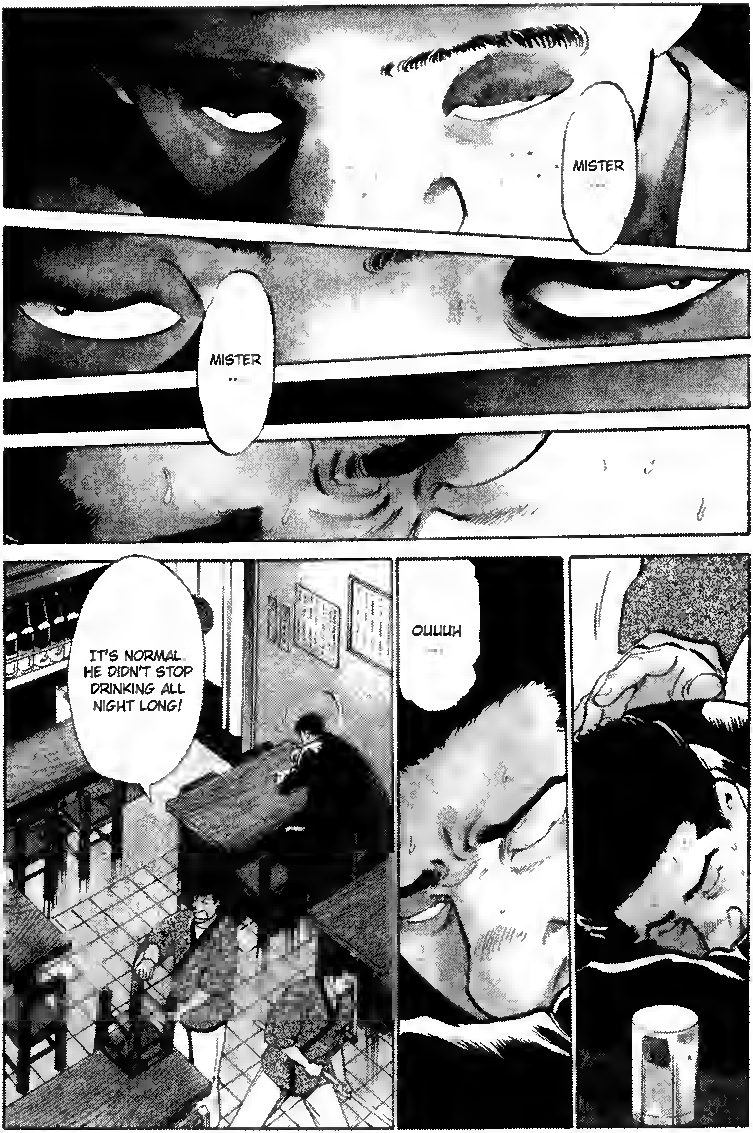
SO THAT'S IT... EVERYTHING'S IN SHAMBLES. YOU DON'T KNOW IF SHE'S AN ALLY OR AN ENEMY ANYMORE!
PFFF.

COME ON, I'LL BRING YOU BACK TO SHINJUKU!

GRII
GRII
GOTO...
SHIT
...

WHY ARE YOU SO AFRAID OF ME...?
CHAPTER 48 :
THE LAMENTATION'S WALL

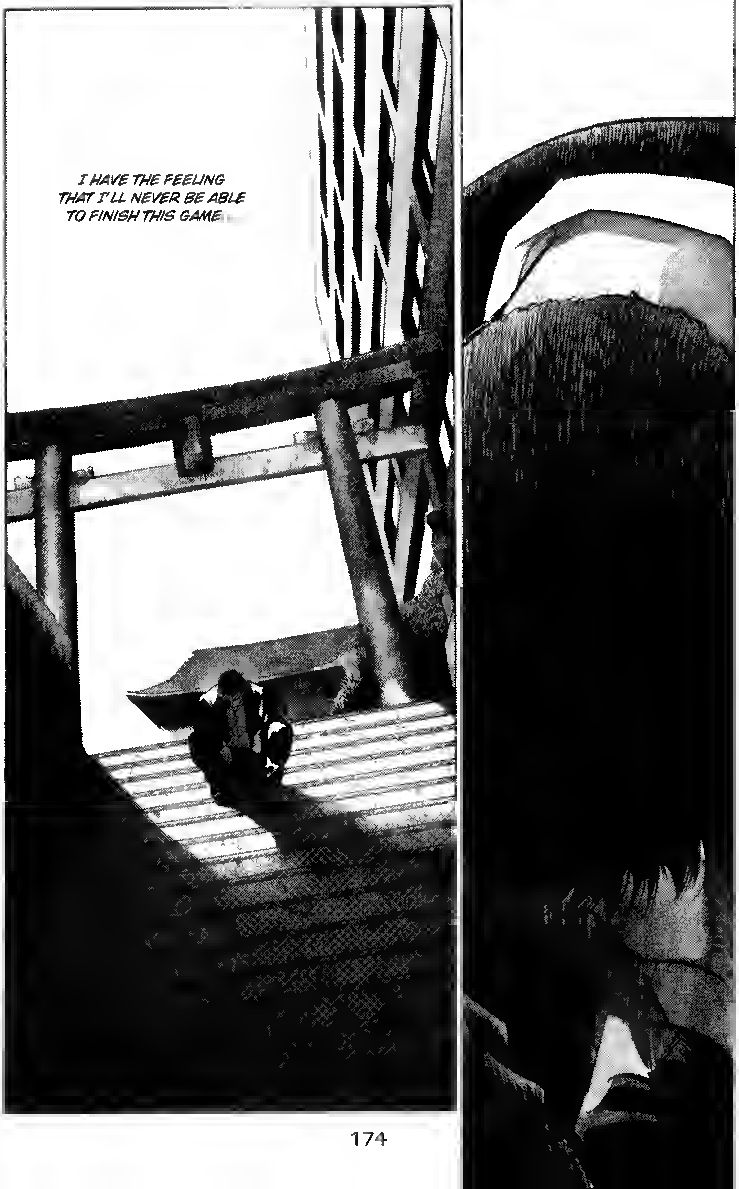



MISTER
MISTER
IT'S NORMAL HE DIDN'T STOP DRINKING ALL NIGHT LONG!
OUUUH

ケンタッキー
ホーム・チキン

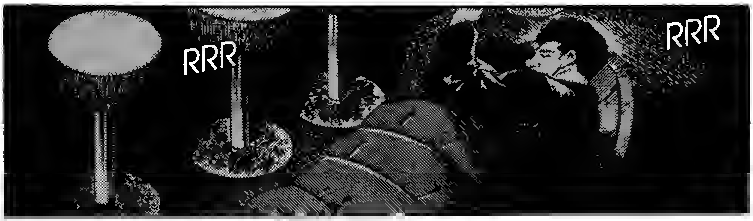
VIU UWW

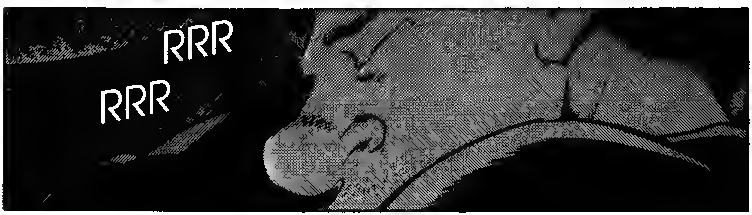
THE PROBABILITY THAT MISS KUSAMA IS IN ON IT...
IF THAT'S THE CASE, NOTHING PROVES THAT DOJIMA IS TAKAAKI KAKINUMA...!?


I HAVE THE FEELING
THAT I'LL NEVER BE ABLE
TO FINISH THIS GAME!

新宿ゴールデン街
SHINJUKU GOLDEN TOWN
WHAT IF HE'S STILL INSI-DE...!?

ALTA
ALTA


RRR
RRR


RRR
RRR

CLIC
CLAC

WE'RE ABOUT TO OPEN...
HAHA... I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE...
SORRY...

HE SAID HE LOST AT I DON'T KNOW WHAT GAME...
MISTER DOJIMA LOOKED UPSET...
HUH...!?
WHAT DID YOU DO LAST NIGHT?
DIDN'T THE TWO OF YOU DRINK TOO MUCH?
AND HE LEFT LIKE THAT, SULKING!
HA HA...
STOP KIDDING !!
I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE PUFFY*, ONLY OLDER...
CLAC
AH... GOOD EVENING!!

*JAPANESE POP BAND - HTTP://EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/PUFFY_AMIYUMI

GOTO
..

TELL ME EVERYTHING ABOUT WHAT YOU'VE BEEN GOING THROUGH!

IS THIS REALLY A TRAP...?

STILL, I CAN'T BELIEVE...
SHE COULD ACT IN A PLAY LIKE THAT...

HERE'S MY OFFICE PHONE NUMBER!
IF YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING, OR IF HE SHOWS UP, CALL ME FROM A PUBLIC PHONE!
AAAH!
WHOA!

TAP
BIP
BIP
BIP
BIP

BIP
DRING
DRING
HELLO..

SILENCE IS ALSO A VOICE!
IS THAT YOU, GOTO. ?
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
IS THIS AN EMERGENCY?
MISS
ARE YOU HIDING SOMETHING FROM ME ?

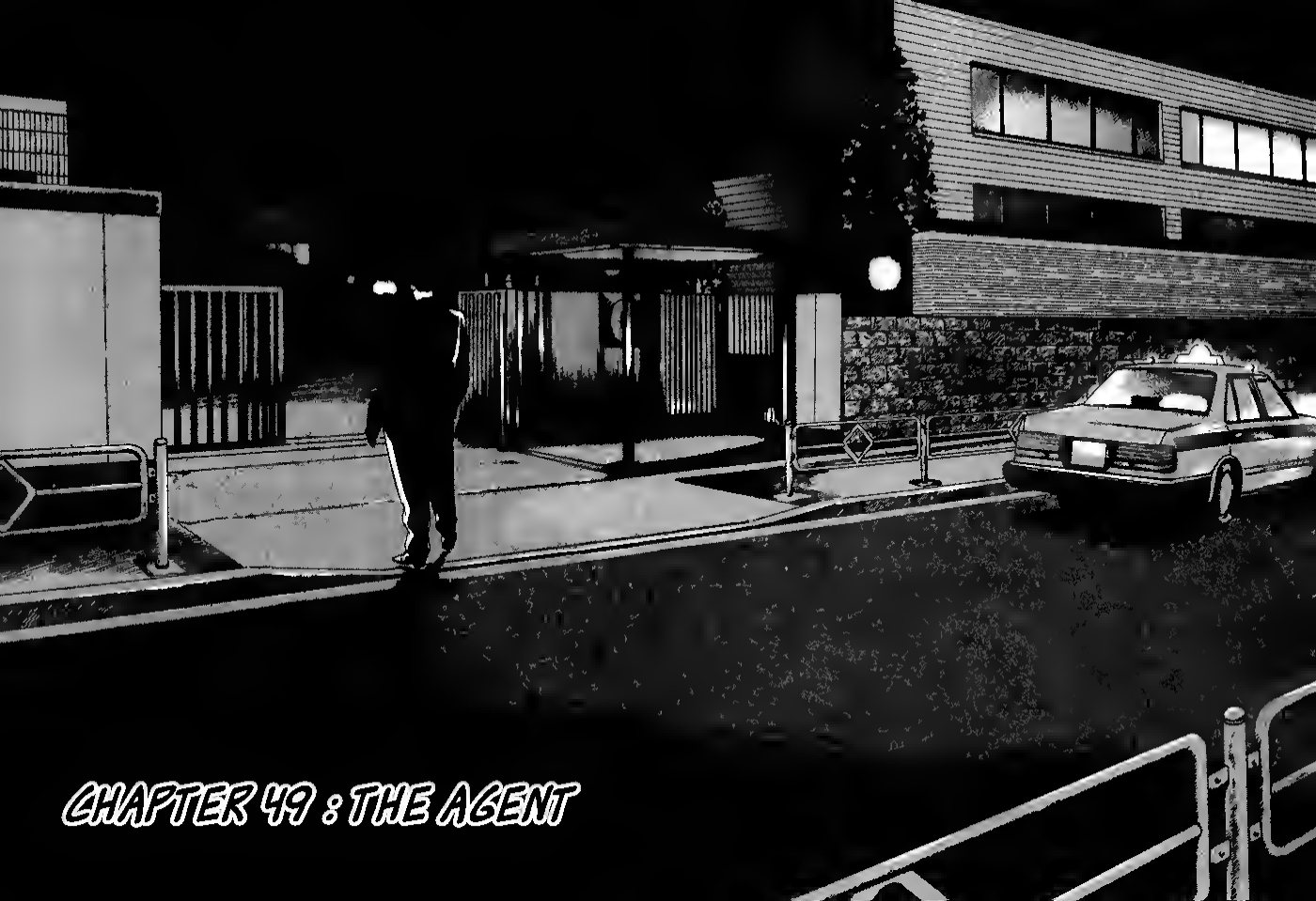
SORRY?
MILD
IT SEEMS IT'S A CONVERSATION WE CAN'T HAVE BY PHONE
DO YOU WANT TO COME TO MY APARTMENT?
GRAB A CAB AND GO TO THE FINNISH EMBASSY IN THE HARBOR NEIGHBORHOOD WITHIN THE NEXT 30 MINUTES, I'LL BE WAITING THERE FOR YOU!
CLICK
GOT IT

NO
PARKING

IF I ASK HER HOW SHE CAN PAY SUCH A HIGH RENT WITH SUCH A SMALL INCOME, HOW WILL SHE ANSWER ME...!?
IF SHE WAS REALLY ON DOJIMA'S SIDE, SHE WOULDN'T TELL ME TO MEET HER AT HER APARTMENT...

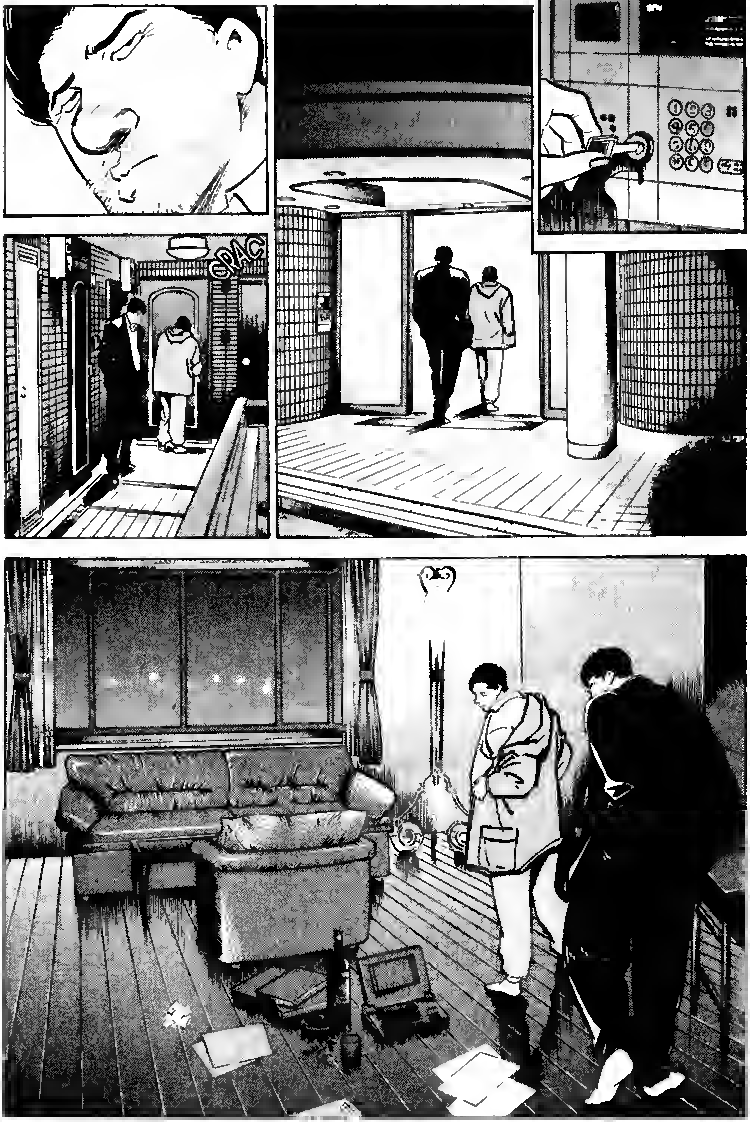
VROOOM
AN EVEN MORE COMPLEX LABYRINTH...

CRII
BADAM

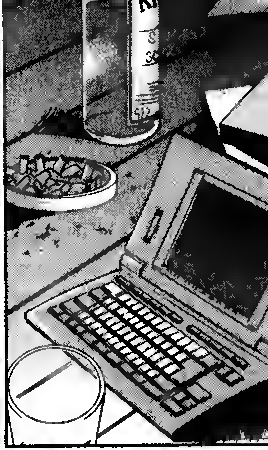

CHAPTER 49 : THE AGENT

TAP
TAP

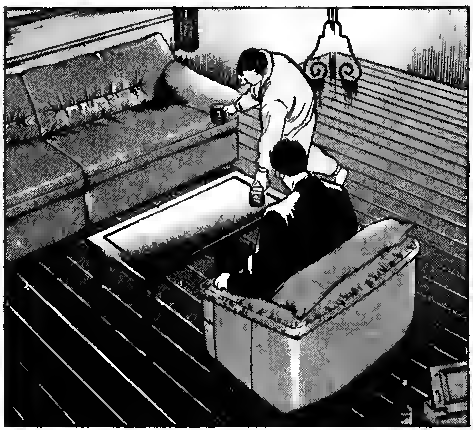
SHE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE SOMEONE ACTING IN A PLAY
DON'T WORRY, YOU'LL CALMLY TELL ME EVERYTHING ABOUT IT!
HAVE YOU BEEN CONTACTED BY DOJIMA?

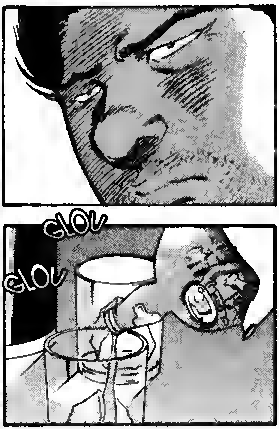

SHUT

I HAVE UNVEILED MYSELF!



CRR
IT'S LIKE I ONLY HAD ALCOHOL AND CIGARETTES AS WEAPONS AGAINST MY TYPEWRITER ...




GLOU
GLOU

EARLIER, YOU ASKED ME IF I WAS HIDING SOMETHING FROM YOU.
HAS DOJIMA PUT IDEAS IN YOUR HEAD? ONE DOUBT LEADING TO ANOTHER..
EVEN WITH THE AGE GAP BETWEEN US, I WAS PHYSICALLY ATTRACTED TO YOU, BUT...
NOW I THINK WE'RE LOCKING OURSELVES INTO A TEACHER-PUPIL RELATIONSHIP!

SO...
ANSWER ME, GOTO... WHY ARE YOU DOUBTING ME?
IN THAT CASE, I ASK YOU THIS AS A TEACHER
DOJIMA GAVE YOU THIS IDEA, RIGHT!?
I THINK THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOUR INCOME AND YOUR STANDARDS OF LIVING IS ABNORMAL
LIVE IN A LUXURIOUS APARTMENT, LIKE THE ONES RENTED BY FOREIGN BOSSES?
CAN'T I...
YES... THAT'S TRUE!

NOWADAYS, READERS PREFER BOOKS WRITTEN BY BLOCK PRINT FANATICS THAN BY EXPRESSIONISTS
THAT'S TRUE, BUT YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT I'M VERY PROUD OF THAT
NO, IT'S JUST
THAT YOU SAID YOURSELF THAT YOUR FIRST BOOK ONLY SOLD 3000 COPIES
THEN, ONE DAY, A WEIRD AGENT SHOWED UP SAYING I WAS A REAL GENIUS
SHE WANTED TO SELL MY NOVEL IN ENGLISH SPEAKING COUNTRIES
AND SHE PAID ME FIFTY MILLION YEN UP FRONT FOR THE RIGHTS TO A NEW NOVEL WITH A HARDCOVER EDITION.

THAT WAS SIX MONTHS AGO!
SHE GAVE ME NO CONDITIONS EXCEPT A ONE YEAR DEADLINE
BUT FOR ME
IN THE USA, THOSE ENORMOUS SLIMS ARE PRETTY COMMON
I THOUGHT WHY NOT DRINK SOME GOOD WINE IN AN OFFICE RENTED FOR ONE AND A HALF MILLION YEN...
IT MIGHT BE THE WHIM OF A WRITER WHO JUST EARNED A BIG AMOUNT, BUT

THAT'S IMPOSSI-BLE...
!!
THAT AGENT MUST H..VE BEEN SENT BY DOJIMA...!?

TEN YEARS AGO, HE DIDN'T HESITATE TO SPEND THREE HUNDRED MILLION YEN TO LOCK ME UP. HAVEN'T YOU NOTICED THAT HE'S ACTING THE SAME WAY?

I'M A BIT DISAPPOINTED

HE PLOTTED EVERYTHING FROM THE START! OUR MEETING WAS SET UP TO MAKE THE GAME MORE INTERESTING!

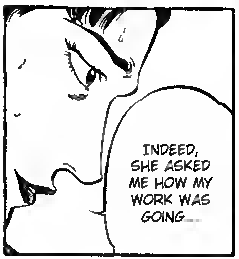
IT'S TRUE HE UNDERWENT PLASTIC SURGERY, BUT..
YOUR TEACHER'S . NO, YOUR WRITER'S INSIGHT DIDN'T HELP YOU SEE THROUGH HIS GAME!?

THAT MAN, IT WAS HIM, TAKAAKI KAKINUMA!!
MY AGENT WAS A WOMAN
BUT

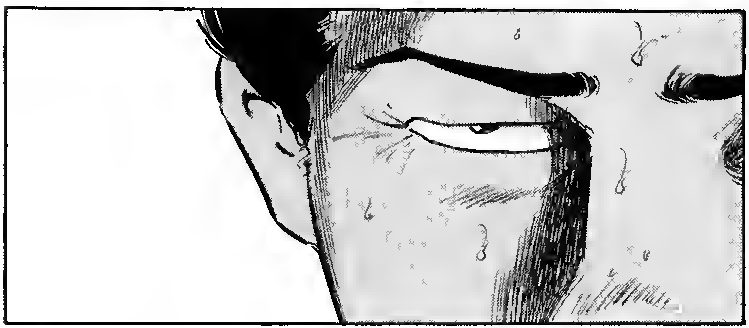
A RICH AMERICAN WOMAN OF JAPANESE ORIGIN...
I DIDN'T ASK HER ABOUT HER AGE BECAUSE SHE WAS A WOMAN...

YOU RECEIVED A CALL FROM HER, RIGHT?
LAST NIGHT...

BUT YOU ONLY HAD TO SEE HER TO NOTICE THAT SHE WAS AN OLD WOMAN...


INDEED, SHE ASKED ME HOW MY WORK WAS GOING...

IT WAS TAKAAKI KAKINUMA!!



TO BE CONTINUED...